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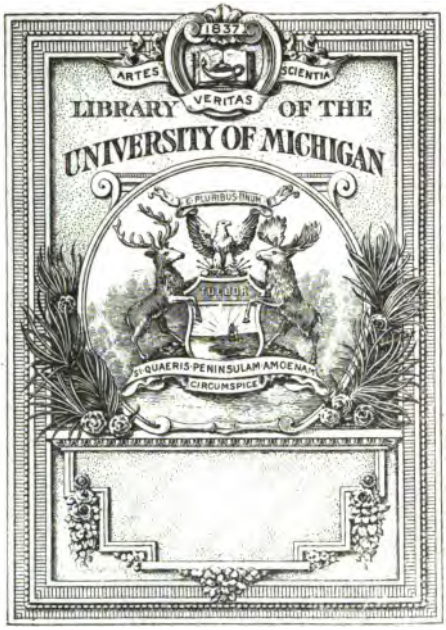
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TRANSITIONAL ERAS IN THOUGHT

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TRANSITIONAL ERAS IN THOUGHT

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WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE PRESENT AGE

BY

A. C. ARMSTRONG, PH.D.

PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

New York

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TO

MY FATHER'S MEMORY

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PREFACE

THE following treatise is an inquiry into the development of Western thought and culture, and in particular their development during the epochs which are specifically considered in the text. Arguing from the nature of thought at large and the conditions under which it develops, as well as from a partial acquaintance with parallel eras in other civilizations than our own, the writer is of the opinion that conclusions similar to those which have here been drawn would hold good of transitional eras generally. But since, for the most part, the thesis defended is discussed with primary reference to the progress of European or Western civilization, the results of the inquiry fully apply to this alone.

Some years ago the attention of the writer was attracted by the analogies which exist between the age of the Sophists in ancient Greece and the later eighteenth century in France. Both of these eras are termed periods of *Aufklärung*, or Enlightenment or Illumination. Both are characterized by notable movements in thought, philosophical and religious, in political and social organization, in practical life and

conduct, which differ in the two ages by all the divergence which measures the distance of antiquity from modern times, but which, notwithstanding this diversity, in spite also of the special phenomena distinctive of the two epochs, are so resemblant that the unity of name is justified. The suggestion then lay near to ask in how far a similar likeness holds among other eras of transition, and, since the historian of opinion, unlike the historian of events, still permits himself to weigh the significance of the facts which he records, what inferences follow bearing on the evolution of opinion and the work which thought is set to do.

The outcome of this inquiry is given in the present volume. The questions proposed are considered in the first instance from the standpoint of reflective thinking and with reference to its problems; of thought always, however, in its broader reaches, as connected with life, individual and social, as related to the state and bearing on civil government, as influencing conduct, and affecting not only theological beliefs, but religious practice. As the investigation has proceeded, moreover, attention has for several reasons been increasingly directed to the present age. This, too, is an era of transition; and whatever can be learned about these eras as a class has a peculiar meaning for thinkers who are grappling with the perplexities of our own time — provided the errors be avoided which, positive and negative, have sometimes marred the researches of

earlier investigators in the field.[1] But in order that such inferences should possess the highest value, they must be brought into correlation with the special circumstances upon which the progress of culture in the given age depends. Therefore the author has deemed it pertinent, after the general discussion of his theme, to make some more particular application of his conclusions to the elucidation and criticism of views which of late have been advanced as solutions for pressing problems, or as the principles on which the thought of the future may advantageously be based.

Many of the subjects treated in the text have also been discussed before different learned bodies, among which may be mentioned the American Psychological Association, the Philosophical Clubs of Yale University and Bryn Mawr College, the Philosophical Society of Oxford, England, and Hartford Theological Seminary. Parts of my material, further, have been printed in different periodicals, as noted at the places where they are incorporated in the present argument.

For suggestions and advice during the preparation of the work I am indebted to several friends and colleagues, to whom I desire to express my thanks; in particular, to Rev. Paul van Dyke, D.D., Professor of History in Princeton University.

Wesleyan University,
November, 1903.

[1] Cf. chap. I., p. 4 note.

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TRANSITIONAL ERAS IN THOUGHT

CHAPTER I[1]

TRANSITIONAL ERAS IN THOUGHT

THERE is an important sense in which almost every era in thought is an era of transition. For since thought is a living not a lifeless thing, and life is instinct with growth and change, every age, unless it be a dead one, must derive much of its inspiration from the past, and point forward in its turn to the thinking of the age that is to come. Dead ages, it is true, the world has known more than once, eras in the history of mankind when intellectual life has been paralyzed or stagnant. But such periods of immobility apart, the genetic growth of thought never comes to a stop. The germinal principles of each succeeding thought-movement in part lie hidden in the conclusions of its predecessor; the full fruitage of each mature development is the precursor of a decline destined to intervene before the new creation "can spring forth from the womb of that which is old and

[1] The original draft of this chapter was printed in *The New World*, September, 1895.

outworn." In fact, the culmination of a movement itself marks the beginning of transition if men but continue to think; for its achievement of success signifies that its work has been accomplished, and the ingathering of the results attained, their integration under the form of a system, must ever, until thought shall at last be perfect, reveal error and incompleteness, and so lead on to fresh inquiry and to reconstruction. The early ideal of the individual, as of the race, is the speedy attainment of the completed system of truth. But those who look more deeply into the records of man's grapple with the problems of the world discover that human thought, like the other works of man, is marred by human finitude, so that growth becomes the only hope for knowledge, even as it is the general law of his advancing life. Not that the search after truth is to be preferred to its possession: Lessing's famous saying was itself the expression of the spirit of a doubting age.[1] Not that the law of change implies the bankruptcy of intelligence, for his is but a shallow judgment who

[1] "Wenn Gott in seiner Rechten alle Wahrheit, und in seiner Linken den einzigen immer regen Trieb nach Wahrheit, obschon mit dem Zusatze, mich immer und ewig zu irren, verschlossen hielte und spräche zu mir: wähle! Ich fiele ihm mit Demuth in seine Linke und sagte: Vater gieb! die reine Wahrheit ist ja doch nur für dich allein." — *Eine Duplik* (1778), I.

so misreads the history of opinion. But that the quest will be long and earnest, that the law of progress is a law of struggle, that the finality of thought is as difficult to reach as the perfection of feeling or the ideal of conduct, that when these or any one of them shall have been attained, the millennial era will be already here.

The law of the development of thought, therefore, is not a simple one. There is progress, but the progress is not without interruption. The thinking of one period issues from the thinking of its predecessor, but the labors of the later age are not always an advance on the work which has preceded. This is especially true of the more complex phases of thought which are commonly termed speculative; those that result in the broad view of the world and of life which, since the time of the Greek sages, has borne the name philosophy, and those others, leading to the deepest and the highest things, which form the bases of theology and religion. Here the line of progress often returns upon itself. Age B does not accept and build on the principles the attainment of which age A had counted among its greatest achievements, but bends its strength at first to the work of destruction. So there comes a time of tearing down and clearing away; a time of dig-

ging about the foundations of belief and action; an era of scepticism, as it was formerly called, or to employ the current phrase, a period of agnostic thought. These ages are eras of transition in the stricter meaning of the phrase. They are not, in the first instance, periods of growth so much as of the decay on which growth is consequent. For the most part, they are characterized by confusion and dismay in the minds of individuals as well as in the spirit of the age. The old is shaken or destroyed; the new is not yet present in its strength and beauty. Thus men grope as those who wander in the dark, convinced of the error of the remembered landmarks but not discerning the way before them, until at length some genius of deliverance appears with a new principle which marks the dawning of a happier time.[1]

[1] Various attempts have been made to establish a more regular alternation of constructive and critical eras than that which is argued in the text, and to bring them under more fixed and regular laws (cf. below, chap. II., pp. 46–48). In part these essays have concerned themselves with thought alone — "periods of faith" and "periods of reason," the succession of dogmatism, scepticism, and criticism in philosophical speculation (cf. G. T. Ladd, *Introduction to Philosophy*, chap. VI.); in part, with culture and civilization at large, *e.g.* the *époques organiques* and *époques critiques* of St. Simon and his school (cf. Bazard, *Exposition de la Doctrine Saint-Simonienne*). In many cases, again, especially in the period immediately succeeding the Revolutionary epoch and while its disorders were still fresh in the minds of thinking men,

The present age has often been termed such a period of transition. The century which has just ended, it is said, especially its second and third quarters, was marked by a notable decline of positive conviction, and the opening years of the century in which we are living have brought only a partial relief from doubt. Science by its marvellous progress has put philosophy under an eclipse, and suggested grave problems for the defenders of religious faith. Historical criticism has made theology reel under its blows, until religion has lost its hold on cultured men and its votaries

the idea of stages of positive and negative culture has been combined with theories of philosophical or general development culminating in the view of thought or things advocated by the given author, or looking forward to a final stage still to be ushered in. By some these philosophical constructions of history have been pushed to the extreme of reducing all the phenomena of development to fixed and unalterable laws and denying all possibility of individual initiative. J. G. Fichte, *Die Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters;* St. Simon and the St. Simonians — Bazard, *op. cit.* (cf. Ch. Renouvier, *La Critique Philosophique, 10me Année*, 1881–1882; Leslie Stephen, *The English Utilitarians*, vol. III., p. 26; J. S. Mill, *Autobiography*, pp. 161 ff.); Auguste Comte, *Cours de Philosophie Positive, tom.* IV.–VI., *Système de Politique Positive, tom.* III.–IV. (cf. R. Flint, *History of the Philosophy of History: Historical Philosophy in France*, 1894, pp. 579–615). It will hardly be necessary to say to the reader of the present treatise that it differs from theories of this class much more than it agrees with them. In addition to other points of difference, the writer finds it impossible to share in the verdict of general condemnation which they often pass on negative eras and movements.

keep the faith solely by the force of their unenlightened will. It is possible, indeed, to question the complete validity of these confident assertions. A caviler might urge that the natural science of our time itself forms a striking example of a fixed, not to say a dogmatic system of belief,[1] and that on the side of religion phenomena exist which deserve to be cited in challenge of the conclusion that faith is now involved in its final decline. To mention nothing more, there is a missionary, it might almost be said a crusading, spirit abroad in the church which wears the aspect of a constructive not a destructive force, and there is a moralizing influence at work in society which carries Christian principles far and wide into the life of mankind, even though certain traditional dogmas be shaken at the centre.

But when the needed deductions have all been made, it must still be confessed that the present age is in large measure a critical period in the history of opinion, as it is also generally recognized that similar crises have occurred from time to time since thought began. The Sophistic age in Greece, the period succeeding the death of Aristotle, when the Greeks yielded up their political power to the Romans at the same time that they lost in intel-

[1] Cf. chap. II., pp. 76–80; chap. III., *passim*.

lectual and moral force, and later the parallel decline of Rome, the centuries of transition from the mediæval to the modern world, the eighteenth century in Western Europe, in particular its closing portions, — these occur at once to those who are conversant with the records of human thinking, while other periods less familiar might be named which exhibit the phenomena of transition with less distinctness or in a narrower field.[1]

Now it is a notable fact, though one not always noted, that these various eras of transition betray a family likeness. Each of them resembles the rest in certain fundamental characteristics; or, more accurately, there is a type common to them all which makes them similar in spite of diversities of individual development. Not every one, perhaps no single one, exhibits all the features of the class, at least not all of them in a complete way. The case is rather as it is with living organisms, the several eras show the type-marks with sufficient distinctness to prove the oneness of the laws which condition them, but each may have, as most do have, peculiarities which emphasize the reality of individuation. Thus the forces of revolution in the several eras reach

[1] For an account of a similar crisis in the history of Israel, see George Adam Smith, *The Book of Isaiah*, vol. I., pp. 172–178.

their maximum effect in different departments of thought and life. One age may be busy with questions concerning the state or the organization of society, and the revolutionary impulse discharges along the line of insurrection, or perhaps of peaceful transition to a new political form. A second period is given to philosophy, and when the time of disintegration comes, men demand a new system to replace the conclusions which they have abandoned or turn in despair from the husks offered by the schools to matters of practical concern. Or some era of settled theological conviction is disturbed by the appearance of opposing doctrines, and the war of sect with sect goes on, so-called conservatism against so-called liberalism, reformers in doctrine or practice confronted by the defenders of old views and by those who seek to cover the sore wounds of the church rather than probe them to the bottom for a thorough healing. Just what such a revolutionary age in science might prove to be, is, as yet, hardly to be determined. For a transitional era in which the forces of change concerned science alone is not a matter of history, if indeed it is possible for one ever to occur. Often as the variations in scientific theory have wrought their momentous consequences in human thinking, it has been their reflex effect on

other departments of thought — philosophy, for example, or religious faith — that has constituted the chief element in their influence. Perhaps, to know what such a scientific revolution might mean, we shall have to wait until natural science, as some expect it will, shall have subdued all things to itself, — and then, it may confidently be concluded, revolutionary transitions in opinion will have forever ended.[1]

For it is to be remarked that these eras of transition are abnormal periods in the intellectual development of the race. They may end in good, it is true; nay, in every case so far their outcome has proved of value, at least in a negative way. Who shall say that it was not worth the misery of the Sophistic time to gain the practical wisdom of Socrates and the soaring visions of Plato and the penetrating genius which appears in Aristotle's work? who dare deny that the Reforming age, with all its intolerance, its persecutions, its sufferings, and its wars, was but a small price to pay for the world's heritage of intellectual and religious freedom? But as in the physical organism, so here, disease is never normal or desirable for its own sake, however salutary its ultimate results may be. Disease brings weakness, and wounds are

[1] Cf. chap. III., pp. 90 ff.

followed by their scars; and though the life itself escape, germs of evil often linger in the system to wreak disaster in later days. This, indeed, is the case with the modern age considered as a whole. The world is growing older, and it has passed the dangers of a somewhat stormy youth. It has also gathered wisdom in its course, and its strength has increased somewhat with its growth. But beneath the surface there is a serious temper in modern thinking which shows that strength, when gained at all, has been won through trial and conflict. We do not now set out to solve the world at a stroke, as men did in the days when thought was young. There is courage in place of confidence, an undertone of sadness mingled with our fondest hopes. We still look forward to the future, as we have a right to do, for history shows that there always is a future, no matter how unhappy the promise of the present may be; but we are conscious that the road to truth will have its dangers and its thorns, we know that man must steel his heart against the vicissitudes of the journey as well as encourage himself with the assurance of final success.

It is evident from these considerations that many of the typical characteristics of eras of transition must be symptoms of decadence. For

although the forces at work in the development of such eras are often of a creative rather than of a destructive kind, their effect in the first instance is almost inevitably negative. The horizon of human knowledge is suddenly extended, or a new discovery spreads beyond the circles of the learned and rapidly makes its way into the consciousness of the people: the movement in essence is beneficial, but its initial influence is revolutionary, destructive of accepted theories, and at least in appearance in conflict with principles of practical importance for which the traditional views have hitherto furnished the basis. In no period is this law more clearly illustrated than in the era of the Renaissance and the Reformation. Then a new interest in the classics springs up in Italy, and a stream of Eastern scholars pours into the West, bringing a fresh revelation of the literature and life of antiquity to the Western mind: the new learning is destined to become a powerful agent in the emancipation of the intellect from mediæval bondage, but it can accomplish its work only by helping to break down the old scholarship, which for centuries has been not only traditional, but sacred. Or, to cite a further illustration, because of the very fact that it propounds a more accurate theory of the order of the universe and

the movements of the heavenly bodies than the view which had been accepted by the ancient and the mediæval world, the new astronomy of Copernicus and Kepler and Galileo destroys the time-honored philosophy of nature, and forces on the church the question of reconciling the truth concerning the physical with the doctrine of the spiritual heavens. The transitional age, therefore, is often a period of mental awakening, an era of Enlightenment or Illumination in the proper meaning of the term. But the new intellectual birth is not effected without an agony of suffering, and the time of its accomplishment is characterized by phenomena of declension.

One of the earliest of these historically, and the one which is most uniformly present, is the breaking up of philosophical systems. So it was in ancient Greece, so at the Renaissance, and so again, though the fact is sometimes overlooked in considering the rush of political events, in Western Europe in the eighteenth century. For systems of philosophy, like the other products of man's mind, grow, and culminate, and decline. It is theirs to formulate the thought of each age in terms of ultimate symbols. They interpret the store of concrete truth which the age has acquired as the result of its scientific activity; they systematize the outcome of

its history, its literature, its religion, its art; they weave all the strands of its thinking into one total view of the world, *its* world, and of life, *its* life. Hence as thought moves on and the new principles resist incorporation into the old fabric, men move onward also, and beyond the accepted philosophemes. At first the age is uplifted by the consciousness of its advance, for it is not till later that the seriousness of the situation is forced home upon men. In the beginning they talk glibly of going beyond this or that great thinker, of transcending the limitations of systems previously in favor, just as in the world of theological reflection much of noisy commonplace is heard about the disintegration of outworn dogmas. Thus the first transitional era, the Sophistic period, closed the pre-Socratic development. The Greeks had started out to solve the riddles of the universe, naïvely confident alike of their powers of comprehension and of the validity of their results. Erelong, however, it appeared that equally pretentious theories of the world yielded directly opposite conclusions. Thus men's minds became bewildered amid the shock of warring systems and the time of upheaval came, when it was held the highest wisdom to believe that all truth is in constant flux. Then it was said, "Man is the measure of all things," and the doctrine of

relativity burned its way into the consciousness of the thinking world; and again, truth is individual, not universal, is temporary, not fixed or eternal, is circumstantial, changing, for permanent, abiding reality there is none, — and as we listen to the Sophists speaking, we recognize anticipations of our own unhappy time. For here we are face to face with a type-mark of transitional eras as a class. Philosophy attempts the hardest problem in the circle of the sciences, — hence she merits the greater honor when she successfully accomplishes any portion of her task; but hence, also, comes her inevitable imperfection and incompleteness until she shall have reached her final goal, and hence by way of corollary, her inevitable rejection by shallower thinkers at the great crises in her progress.

This first characteristic of transitional eras is notable, further, because of its causal relation to the movement of transition. Other forces may come into play at different stages in the process of disintegration; the decline of philosophy forms one condition of the coming of the change in all. The pre-Socratic age ended in the negations of the Sophists. After Aristotle the speculation of antiquity was characterized by a notable decline in power. As mediævalism tottered to its fall, men more and more abandoned faith in the metaphysics

of the Scholastic doctors until they reached the evasion of the twofold truth, and the divorce of theology and its handmaid was prepared. A hundred and fifty years ago it was Voltaire and Condillac, Diderot and La Mettrie and Holbach and Rousseau, that helped give form and voice to the forces of upheaval slumbering in the life of France. It need scarcely be added that the agnosticism of the present age is in part a continuance of the decline of philosophy with which the eighteenth century closed, in part a reaction from the immoderate speculative pretensions with which the nineteenth century in Germany began. The phenomena here, it is true, are mingled in marvellous complexity. Philosophy is always an effect as well as a cause, it appears in the ebb as in the flow of the transitional movement; but cause, one cause, it has been in these periods of crisis in the past, and cause, one cause, it will probably continue to be as often as they shall from time to time recur.

Mutatis mutandis, these conclusions concerning the influence of philosophy in eras of transition hold good as well of a second form of dogmatic opinion, which crystallizes in the principles of religion and theology. In some instances the decline of religious belief precedes the break-up in philosophy, the accepted doctrines of religion

being gradually outgrown until the disturbance passes over to the metaphysical positions with which the traditional faith has been allied or reinforces nascent doubt in relation to the systems of the schools. This was the case in Greece in the fifth century before the Christian era, when growing dissatisfaction with the national faith, consequent upon the development of culture, proved a potent contributory cause in the genesis of Sophism. Sometimes a change in the dominant type of speculative thinking precipitates disaster in the region of theological reflection. Such was the effect of the progress of science and the development of a new philosophy upon religion and theology in the eighteenth century in Western Europe. In neither of these cases, however, is the example pure, for both approximate — the first perhaps in less, the second to a more marked, degree — the more frequent type, which shows philosophy and theology so mingled in the time of their authority and so intimately associated in their resistance to new principles pressing for acceptance that it becomes impossible to draw sharp lines of distinction between their spheres of influence as they act and react in the development of opinion. The classical illustration of this commoner type is found in the transition from the mediæval to the modern world.

For dissatisfaction with the philosophical and theological doctrines of the church, as well as revolt from the mingled tyranny and corruption of the Papal body, were among the tap-roots of that growth whose fruitage is the modern spirit. The Scholastic philosophy, centred about theological dogma, was by its inherent weakness preparing the way for its own rejection at the same time that the religiously disposed among the later mediævals were growing weary of the monstrosities of the ecclesiastical life and turning against Mother Church. So the Reformation in matters spiritual was furthered by the Renaissance in the matters of the intellectual life. The humanist wrought for a time as a friend and coadjutor of the reformer; the new science, in its revolt against the tyranny of thought, found its counterpart in the rebellion against the tyranny over the heart; the refusal to submit to authority in questions purely philosophical reinforced, and was reinforced by, the doctrine of the right of private judgment in regard to questions of faith.

The outcome of the twofold process of disintegration is a failure alike of philosophical and of religious conviction. As the transitional movement continues to develop, the endeavors at reform, which at the outset were intended only to do away

with principles that in the course of time had become unsatisfactory, result in a general ruin. The negation of the established metaphysic leaves men without a basis for thought and action, the boasted freedom from dogmatic bias proves a void of religious indecision. Hence a demand arises for new foundations for belief and conduct. The old trust in systematic reflection is, for the time at least, destroyed, and the need for principles of practice makes itself acutely felt; therefore the time-honored problems of metaphysics and theology are thrust into the background, while others of more immediate and vital moment engage the attention of thoughtful minds. Questions about the gods and the world to come, questions about man's nature and his origin, questions about the soul and its immortal destiny, now appeal to the interest of mankind more than general theories of the universe, or the abstruser articles of dogmatic theology. In so far as the age is disposed to reflect at all upon the deeper issues, the philosophy of religion becomes a favorite subject of inquiry. Not only do the defenders of the traditional faith rally to the defence of their principles endangered by the tendencies of the time, but the advocates of liberal opinions make it a part of their task to propose substitutes for the objects of their attacks.

So in the eighteenth century the conservative element in the negative party contended for God and freedom and immortality as the legitimate conclusions of rational theology, even though faith in Revelation had been destroyed; in the nineteenth, positivism summoned the faithful to the worship of humanity, and agnosticism proposed the cult of the Unknowable as fitted to console men for its lack of content by the impregnability of its foundation in demonstrable truth.

Moreover, and very markedly, the movement involves the principles of morals as well as religious faith. This in fact is the point at which the issues weigh most heavily upon the hearts of thoughtful men. The philosophy of an age is at most but half-conscious in the minds of the people; even should it be proved untenable, even if religion should in measure fail, the earnest soul still can gird itself to do the right. But when the forces of disintegration make their way into the sphere of conduct, the world grows desolate indeed. As good men waver, striving amid the breakdown of the old foundations to discover some tenable basis for the moral law, as bad men welcome relief from the restraints on individual life or ply their arts to the detriment of public virtue and the weakening of the social health, the strain becomes unendur-

able for those who are seeking solutions for the problems of the time. Here, therefore, belief makes its final stand; here the sceptic or agnostic meets the stoutest resistance to his views; here the movements of recoil and recuperation often begin their beneficent work; here, in the meanwhile, a remnant of positive thinking lingers, though all else be given over to confusion and destruction. Thus it is explained that many of the classical systems of ethics have had their origin in ages of transition. In declining antiquity, the Stoics and the Epicureans came forward with their doctrines when the influence of Plato and Aristotle was waning and the Christian ethic had not yet dawned upon the world. In the stormy eighteenth century, the leading nations of thinking Europe — Britain and France and Germany — busied themselves in greater or less degree with ethical speculations. So once more in our later age, and from out the very ranks of the empirical and agnostic schools, have come Bentham and Mill in the past, Spencer and Stephen and their many followers in the present, seeking to prevent the disaster which may be expected to follow "the decay and death of a regulative system no longer fit, before another and fitter regulative system has grown up to replace it." [1]

[1] Herbert Spencer, *Principles of Ethics*, Preface to Part I.

The truth of Mr. Spencer's position is independent of the particular movement to which his words immediately refer. Whether the principles of evolutionary ethics are, or are not, superior to the regulative system which they are intended to supplant, it is beyond question that the possibility of practical disaster lurks in the background of all great changes in fundamental moral convictions. If proof of the proposition were needed, it would be sufficient to glance at the phenomena of moral degeneracy by which the various transitional eras have been marked: the decay of the Athenian spirit in the time of the Sophists, the moral corruption of declining Greece and Rome, the miserable issues of mediæval Christianity, the neo-paganism, polite and corrupt in one, of the Italian Renaissance, the excesses of the Revolutionary epoch, the sordid materialization of poverty and the luxurious despiritualization of riches under the conditions of life in the present age. Nevertheless, it is true that such developments are not the result of the intellectual ferment alone. In part they depend upon the weakening of regulative principles which the confusion in reflective thinking inevitably occasions; in part they are due to an enfeeblement of conscience and the moral will, which is comparable to the failure of intellectual effort, and like this,

also, indicative of the decay under which the spirit of the age is suffering. The iniquities of the later pagan culture, the vice of the Renaissance, the blood-madness of the Terror, cannot be entirely accounted for by the fact that accepted principles in restraint of conduct had been suddenly called in question, nor wholly ascribed to the liberation of passion consequent upon the destruction of the traditional foundations of the moral law. On the contrary, these outbreaks of the worst passions of which the human heart is capable are symptoms and effects of the general degeneracy, as well as collateral results of the decline of systematic belief. The disorder preying upon the vitality of the transitional age is at once theoretical and practical, intellectual and moral. It is a disease which saps the vigor of the heart and conscience at the same time that it impairs the activity of thought. Therefore its causes must be looked for in the region of ethical as well as in the sphere of intellectual development, and thought and action must coöperate in the endeavor to effect a cure. Earnest thinkers who seek to frame more tenable moral systems to take the place of older doctrines which have perished amid the tumults of the times, make effectual contribution to the means of recovery; but a reformation of practice is also indispensable, and this

no system of morals, however lofty or however well founded it may be, is able to produce of itself alone.

This conclusion suggests certain facts concerning eras of transition which the discussion hitherto has not brought into view. In the first place, it reveals the great complexity of the phenomena involved. As the inquiry proceeds from the confusion in abstract opinion to the disturbance in the sphere of conduct, it leaves behind the factors which are predominantly causal and comes on others which may more accurately be described as produced effects. It is not to be supposed, indeed, that any one element in the total process is exclusively cause or effect: the several phases of the transitional movement are too closely connected among themselves for such an assumption ever to be true. But as thought passes the series in review, the balance of antecedence and sequence alters, and phenomena present themselves whose position in the one class or the other is unstable, or which tend even to come out from the category of producing causes altogether and to take their place among the resulting effects.

In the second place, it is evident that the forces at work — and the results of their action — are

not to be found in thought alone, but in the intimate alliance of thought and life. Of this a striking example is furnished by the relation of movements in opinion to the vicissitudes of political and civil history. For it is an abnormal condition of affairs — if it ever literally exists — when the life of an age plays no part in the formation of opinion, or the spirit of the time fails to affect the course of political and social development; and in the critical eras these tendencies have never been separated. As remarked above, it was reflective thought that helped bring to a focus the disturbing forces in eighteenth-century France till they surged forth in the Revolution and the Terror, but the *philosophes* themselves were phenomena of rebellion as really as the starving peasants or the imbruted populace of the capital, whose leaders burned with passion for the cult of reason and the rights of man. What, for instance, was the character of the coryphæus of the movement in its earlier phases? Was Voltaire merely a sneering Deist, a cynical, conceited littérateur who misused his genius for the pleasure of destruction and the malicious delight which his gibes afforded him, or was it legitimate revolt against the foulness in the head and in the members of the body

politic and the body ecclesiastical in one that found an outlet in his attacks upon the established order? And what was the special secret of the success of Diderot and his fellow-editors of the great Encyclopædia in spreading their doctrines among the people of France, if not the adaptation of the work to the needs of French society at the time?[1] And how would Rousseau's extravagant theories of the social order have accomplished their revolutionary work, had they made their appearance in an age free from physical distress, from inequitable class distinctions, from tyrannical oppression, from bitter social need? The case is similar with other eras of transition. In early Greece the disputes of Eleatic and Heracleitan, of Atomistic materialist and Anaxagorean defender of spirit were not the only causes that precipitated the Sophistic movement. To understand Sophism, factors must also be taken into account other than the abstract discussions of the preceding age,— facts of national growth and development, of constitutional and social change in Athens, of civil war with Sparta, and the like.[2] The final decline of Greek thinking was contemporaneous with the loss of politi-

[1] Cf. chap. II., pp. 72–73.

[2] Cf. E. Zeller, *Pre-Socratic Philosophy*, vol. II., pp. 394–407.

cal power; the decay of the Roman spirit prepared the way for the successful inroads of the northern invaders; the period of transition from mediæval to modern Europe and the epoch of the Revolution were eras at once of political and of spiritual change. The fact is much the same in the life of nations as it is in the history of the individual man: when a system of thought is adopted by a nation or an age, it is because it expresses and exemplifies the spirit of those by whom it is accepted. The turning-points of history, in particular, are times when men's hearts are stirred, when the blood courses swift and hot in their veins, as they rise against the forms and formulas in which hitherto the national life has found its crystallized expression; and so the rebellion in their hearts and deeds becomes the counterpart of the revolution in their reasoned conclusions.

Exhaustive consideration of the significance of practical movements in transitional eras is precluded by the limits of this inquiry, which more particularly concerns itself with the development of opinion. It is to be noted, however, as a further characteristic feature of such critical periods, that the type of speculation then in vogue and the favored principles of action alike supply mate-

rial for a remarkable propagandist activity. The strenuousness with which the propagandism is carried on, varies with the spirit of the age. In eras when thought is so predominantly negative that a general paralysis of reflection is the note of the time, the endeavor to extend the influence of destructive principles itself assumes a languid form. In eras, on the contrary, when destruction is motived by the greatness of the work it is set to accomplish, — when some time-honored system has outlived its power, so that the doing away with principles formerly of value becomes the indispensable condition of progress, or when some corrupt development, deep seated in the spiritual organism, needs to be excised, — the negative movement may take on the aspect of a crusade. Most important of all, when justifiable negation is allied with positive movements valid in themselves or in the eyes of their defenders, the impulse to spread abroad the liberating doctrine becomes a sacred mission for those who sympathize with the tendencies of the time. These phenomena, moreover, explain the devotion of the "Enlightened" to the instruction of classes of the people usually considered impervious to appeals in behalf of abstract principles. On the one side, there is the ardent desire to increase

the sway of the new gospel by extending its benefits to the many who have suffered under the pressure of traditional dogmas, though it may very well be that they have been unconscious of the sources whence their misery has sprung: on the other, there is the preparation, also, it may be, but imperfectly realized, for a change in the spiritual basis of life which has been made as the power and the value of principles, once unquestionably accepted, have begun to diminish. Thus the negative party is led to take up an educational task. Through the teaching of the schools it will gradually transform the controlling principles of belief and action; through the medium of literature or the influence of the spoken word it will gain a hearing for conclusions so satisfactory in the estimation of those to whom they have so far been communicated that they may be expected to exert a regenerating influence on the masses of the people as well.

The success of this endeavor marks the culmination of the transitional movement. When it has made its conclusions part of the common stock of thought, in particular, when it has so affected the spirit of the age that they not only gain acceptance but are transmuted into action, then its work is done. By way of destruction it has accomplished

the overthrow of the systems against which its attack was aimed; to constructive or reconstructive effort it has contributed all the assistance which it is in any way able to supply. Erelong, as in the case of other movements in thought, it is to be expected that the time of its culmination will be succeeded by the beginning of its decline. Secure in their confident belief in the validity of their conclusions, its leaders may ignore the fact that their authority will soon begin to wane. Nevertheless, it will be vain for them to hope to escape the influence of the forces which but now they invoked in the conflict with their fallen foes. The laws of growth and of decay will be found to apply to negative as to positive speculation. The era of transition must itself pass away.[1]

Careful examination will show, also, that the regular or lawful character of transitional eras which was premised at the outset of the inquiry appears in their closing phases, as well as in the beginnings and the development of the transitional movement. The earliest indication of the decline of negative reflection is furnished by the appearance of dissatisfaction with the results of unbelief: dissatisfaction or disappointment, it is important to note, with the outcome of theoretical negation as

[1] Cf. chap. VII.

well as with the results of scepticism in the sphere of practice. For at this point in the discussion it is necessary to criticize an erroneous view which has long obscured the truth, and the exposure of which is indispensable in order to a just estimation of the principles involved. It is often assumed, especially at the commencement of sceptical periods, that the conclusions of destructive thinking are adequate to meet the needs both of the individual mind and of society.[1] Longer experience proves the conviction as delusive in regard to the matters of the intellect, considered in its strictly theoretical aspect, as it has already been found to be in regard to the principles of practical life.[2] Under the stress of intellectual struggle, it has been shown in the course of mental development that human thinking cannot be confined within the limits which scepticism assigns to it. The fact, indeed, has been demonstrated again and again and again in every such era as those which are now under consideration. The Sophists deny all settled truth, and within two generations Socrates and Plato and Aristotle devote their genius to the refutation of the charge. The heathen world perishes amid disillusion and corruption, but Christianity conducts man a long stage forward in his intellectual as

[1] Cf. above, pp. 12–13. [2] Cf. above, pp. 17–23.

in his spiritual progress. Nominalism brings mediæval philosophy to a close, despair on the one side, exultant negation on the other — Bacon and Hobbes, Descartes and Spinoza start the modern mind on a new quest after fundamental truth. So, also, a century and a quarter ago, Hume was followed by Reid and Kant, Kant in turn by the Idealistic school, not now to enlarge upon the reaction from the Deism of the eighteenth century to broader and more adequate philosophies of religion; while at the present time, after another period of miserable speculative wandering, thoughtful men are taking up once more the work of positive reflection. Thinkers there are still who celebrate the inherent value of denial[1]; but experience joins with the critical analysis of human faculty to convince those who are more versed in the annals of the mind that, if the results of sceptical thinking should ever be proven the only tenable conclusions, the intellect

[1] These are to be found chiefly among the "agnostics." Cf. "The Declaration of the Free" by the late Robert G. Ingersoll, printed in the *New York Herald* for July 26, 1899. A single stanza may be quoted: —

"The simple truth is what we ask,
Not the ideal;
We've set ourselves the noble task
To find the real.
If all there is is naught but dross,
We want to know and bear our loss."

would be shorn of its glory and its crown. For they perceive that man will think, despite all efforts which may be made to check his labor on the great recurrent problems of the ages; and, further, that this ingrained tendency itself is evidence that thought is more than a mere sport of reason, as it is sometimes asserted to be, more than a malady of mind in an undeveloped state.

But the disappointment which scepticism breeds is never so acute in the intellectual as it is in the moral sphere. The failure of knowledge is bitter — the decay of ethical principles and the eclipse of faith produce deeper despondency still in the souls of earnest men. Practical motives therefore unite with the interests of theoretical intelligence to create a demand for new attacks upon the problems of the mind, or to call forth efforts to escape the pressure of the deeper issues by securing the benefits which would result from their complete decision without risking the difficulties and dangers involved in attempts directly to resolve them. In the absence of speculative confidence, for instance, originality of thought declines and men grasp restlessly at the fragments of older doctrines that have survived the general ruin. Thus when the movement of transition has reached the turning-point, or the tide is a little past the flood, one typical develop-

ment is an eclectic form of thought, which strives to gain a foothold by combining elements selected from the various systems that have found favor with mankind. In the opinion of the members of the eclectic school, new constructive reflection on the questions of the universe is manifestly vain. All the possible answers have already been worked out by the master-thinkers of the ages; and since the acceptance of extreme principles, on the one side or the other, has merely served to lead the mind astray, — the further into error, indeed, the more consecutive the reasoning from the imperfect premises adopted, — the only hopeful plan remaining is to follow a middle course. No one solution of the universe taken by itself is true, no single system is adequate to the explanation of the great world about us. Let us make a combination, then, of all that is good in all the thinking of the ages past; especially let us preserve whatever in each system has made for the support of religious faith and the promotion of right conduct among mankind. Thus we shall attain the maximum of truth which it is possible for finite intelligence to reach, and at the same time secure a firm foundation for those principles of action which to men of good will are of greater value than any matters of purely intellectual concern.

To many minds eclecticism of this type offers an attractive programme; and a certain amount of evidence in its support may be derived from the impracticability of framing a complete and final system of the world. It is undeniable, however, that in the history of transitional eras its appeals have found a welcome chiefly from thinkers who must be classed with the less rather than with the more profound spirits, even of their own distracted times. In antiquity the barrenness of speculative thought among the Romans and their dependence upon the philosophy of Greece may be attributed in part to the eclectic tendencies of a decadent age, as well as to the racial lack of speculative endowment; in modern times the shallow syncretism of the German Illumination and the work of the Eclectic school in France, under the leadership of Cousin, fail to suggest that the eclectic principle possesses any deep or enduring value. And this, the witness of history, coincides with the verdict of critical reflection, which, as it is easy to perceive, rests on considerations of unquestionable force. For the eclectic, at least the eclectic of the pure type, attempts a task which is impossible in itself, and incapable even of partial accomplishment without the abandonment of the formal principle of the undertaking. To weld all the salient doctrines

of the various schools into one concordant whole is obviously impossible, if the project is conceived in any serious way, however valuable the temporary service of eclecticism may be in minimizing the antagonism of opposing principles until they can be thought through to their ultimate adjustment. And the endeavor in any degree to combine the elements which the eclectic selects from the systems which he passes in review must either degenerate into patchwork, or proceed upon a reasonable plan. If he adopts the former of these alternatives, his labor is condemned from the beginning; if the latter, he ceases *pro tanto* to be an eclectic and himself becomes a thinker on the problems of his age. It is intelligible, therefore, that the work of the eclectic school has always proved an expedient rather than a systematic movement, a type of thought of temporary significance merely, untenable for those who resolutely face the questions of the world.

A second product of reflection in the final stage of transitional eras is at once less transient and more noble. The progress of destructive criticism, as we have already seen, is from the region of theoretical discussion to the sphere of conduct; and conversely, as has also been suggested, the work of reconstruction often begins at the point

where the forces of disintegration lose their effect. The head has been found impotent to solve the riddles of the world and life; men now begin to hope that a working system can be discovered through the instincts of the heart. Reason has failed in its endeavor to solve the problems which mankind most of all desires to understand. Is it not rational therefore to turn to the feelings and the conscience, which go deeper down toward the sources whence life and personality proceed than any cold abstractions can penetrate? Surely there must be enough of natural light vouchsafed man to guide his conduct in this world and enough of spiritual insight to yield him hints about the life which is to come. So in periods of intellectual failure or despair, men recoil from the philosophy of reason to the philosophy of faith, or the philosophy of feeling, or the philosophy of instinct — in a word, to the philosophy of the heart. Mediævalism, half emancipated from ecclesiastical domination, develops the evasion of the twofold truth, but puts forth also some of its fairest blossoms, ere it dies, in the thinking of the mystics. Similar movements meet the historian of opinion when the centuries of transition proper are passed and the early stress of modern thought begins to make itself felt. At this period thinkers like

Bayle[1] mingle scepticism and Christian belief in so strange proportions that it remains a question whether they should be classed as hypocritical sceptics or cynical believers; while, with a more reverent spirit, Pascal[2] turns away from reason to base religion and morals upon feeling, belief, or instinct. But it is especially toward the close of the eighteenth century, after the development of Deism and the philosophy of the Revolution, that the appeal to faith gains an important place in modern thought. In France the pre-Revolutionary movement culminates in the sentimental deism of Rousseau's Savoyard Vicar.[3] In Germany Jacobi, the chief of the thinkers to whom the name faith-philosopher most specifically applies, relies on the witness of faith as a defence against the pantheistic issue of Spinoza's rationalism, on the one hand, and the outcome of Kant's critical speculation, on the other.[4] Meantime "from Königsberg itself rings out" a clearer if a colder note, as Kant endeavors to find in "practical reason" the warrant for the postulates of moral and spiritual life which

[1] Cf. R. Falckenberg, *History of Modern Philosophy* (English translation by the author of the present treatise), pp. 149–152.

[2] *Pensées, passim;* cf. Falckenberg, *ibid.*, pp. 143–144.

[3] *Émile*, IV.

[4] Besides F. H. Jacobi, the leaders of the *Glaubensphilosophie* were Hamann and Herder. Cf. Falckenberg, *ibid.*, pp. 310–314.

"pure reason" had denied him; while, later, Schleiermacher proposes to ground religion in "the feeling of absolute dependence" and Christian experience, and doctrines of a less earnest type appear among the positions advocated by other members of the Romantic school.

In the century and more which has elapsed since the time of Kant the tendency in question has made further progress. Fostered by the reaction from pure intellectualism which has been so characteristic of later modern thinking, as it was also so much needed, it has developed into the widespread movement to make religion and morals dependent on the emotional and volitional sides of human nature rather than matters of theoretical knowledge.[1] More specifically, the appeal to faith has been raised in the period under consideration by that large class of thinkers who, although they refuse to ignore the critical questions which are suggested by modern investigation, are minded to maintain the essentials of belief. Here belong the man of science with an earnest interest in the defence of spiritual principles[2] and the metaphysi-

[1] The influence of Schleiermacher has in this respect strongly reinforced the work of Kant.

[2] The late G. J. Romanes, for example; cf. chap. II., pp. 81–82, and chap. VI., p. 241.

cian by profession,[1] the philosopher of religion and the theologian,[2] poets and men of letters not a few,[3] the artistic temperament in its nobler forms proving itself peculiarly responsive to the claims of the ideal nature — in short, among those who favor the appeal to faith are to be numbered thinkers of the most diverse types, who yet are brought together by the endeavor, in their own behalf or for the sake of others, to stem the tide of negation which for so long has been rolling in upon the modern mind.

The special application of the faith doctrine is to the principles of morality and religion. In

[1] Sir William Hamilton ("On the Philosophy of the Unconditioned," 1829); F. Paulsen (*Einleitung in die Philosophie*, 1892, pp. 8 ff., 251 ff., 322 ff. — 9th ed., 1903); W. James (cf. chap. VI., pp. 239 ff.); and many others.

[2] *E.g.* H. L. Mansel (*Limits of Religious Thought*, 1858). At the present time perhaps the most successful school of German theologians, the school which owes its inspiration as well as its name to Albrecht Ritschl (1822–1889), makes judgments of worth or value the vehicle of religious conviction, thinking thereby to escape not merely the difficulties created by modern science and philosophy, but also the questions which are raised by modern critical inquiries and the doubts which arise within the sphere of theology itself. Cf. A. E. Garvie, *The Ritschlian Theology*, pp. 172–193.

[3] Schiller, Châteaubriand, Tennyson (cf. the *Memoir* by his Son, vol. I., chap. XIV.; also, E. Hershey Sneath, *The Mind of Tennyson*), Browning (cf. H. Jones, *Browning as a Philosophical and Religious Teacher*, pp. 233–273, 314–339), may be instanced as representative of a numerous class.

some instances it has been extended to cover fundamental theoretical, as well as fundamental practical, positions, but more often the tendency of its advocates is to abandon metaphysics in the theoretical meaning of the term in order to preserve the principles of religion and conduct. For when men are driven to bay in the struggle to maintain the validity of their most intimate and most cherished convictions, they are willing to give up all but the citadels of the inner life, holding the surrender a small price to pay for the rescue of truths which they consider of transcendent importance. But in so doing, as they soon discover, they sacrifice the abstract foundations of the principles on which they put the highest value; so that additional need arises to call on the emotional and volitional sides of mind to supply a basis for belief and action. Morals are now declared to rest upon the deliverances of man's ethical nature, unsupported by any deeper or more inclusive principles. Religion must exchange the letter for the spirit, and this for apologetic as well as ethical reasons, since the only possible way of escape from doubt is through the adoption of the spirit rather than of the formulas of devotion. The response to the demands of truth echoing in our souls is interpreted as a

special spiritual faculty which guarantees the validity of its own message, but which is not to be confused with reason — for "religion is not a matter of the intellect but of the heart," "not of reason but of faith."

At a later stage of this inquiry[1] it will be necessary to consider whether the philosophy of faith or feeling possesses permanent worth. For often as it appears in the history of reflection, and although its appeal to the nobler elements in human nature is as inspiring as it is insistent, it is plain that in the end it must reckon alike with the attacks of theoretical reason upon the validity of its primary assumption and with the conclusions which have been established by other forms of thought. So stern questions come up which simply cannot be ignored. Is any complete separation possible, or desirable, between the cognitive and the affective factors in belief? Is the faith-philosophy tenable when it is tested by the usual criteria of thought? And if sound in principle, is it adequate to support the spiritual interests of mankind? By way of anticipation, it may be stated here that the outcome of the later discussion will bear in favor of the doctrine, though in a moderate rather than an extreme form. For the pres-

[1] See chap. VI.

ent it is more important to note that, whatever be the ultimate significance of the movement, in eras of transition it accomplishes a useful work. Although it excites the scorn of negative thinkers and for the time rouses them to fiercer denunciation of opinions which, as they view the matter, stand in need of forlorn appeals to the emotions in order to save positions which the progress of knowledge has compromised, it interferes with the success of their destructive activity by bringing into prominence the inherent presumptions in favor of spiritual principles. To minds bewildered by the conflicting results of thought, it offers a means of preserving their confidence in ideal truth in the face of difficulties which they are able neither to grasp in their completeness nor successfully to resolve. Others who with fuller knowledge are oppressed by the discrepancies between the results of reflective thought and the verities of the spiritual life, are encouraged now to accept the faith-principle as a solution of their doubts, now to find in it the token that broader and more satisfactory answers to the questions of the age may in time be looked for.

Apart from the assistance which the faith-philosophy supplies in the recovery from unbelief, it is full of meaning as a further sign of the disintegra-

tion of the transitional movement. The development of dissatisfaction with negative conclusions is proof, as we have seen, that the age has passed its point of culmination — the endeavor to bulwark religion and morals by the evidence of faith forms the first attempt with promise, since eclecticism fails, to transcend the difficulties by which the confusion in opinion has been caused. In itself imperfect and of but partial though significant validity, it points thought forward to a happier time, when, with fresh resolution and renewed confidence in the scope of its powers, the mind shall resume its task as a framer rather than a censor of explanations of the world and life. For thus it is, as will be shown in more detail below,[1] that eras of transition in thought are brought to their definitive termination. As the dissolution of the older doctrines proceeded from the fact that criticism or discovery had broken down the foundations upon which they rested, so a broader and more accurate synthesis is required to supply the premises for the labor and the life of the later time. If the work of destruction was effected under the leadership of some master critic, who exposed the weakness of time-honored views or the absurdities in which they issue when compared

[1] Cf. chap. VII., pp. 306 ff.

with the revelations of advancing knowledge, so when negation is to be replaced by creative effort there is need for some great personality — some Socrates, Plato, Luther, Kant — to lead man's thought a further stage toward the completion of its work. Thought and life coöperated in the genesis of the sceptical movement — life and thought, the impulse of the heart to inspire, the action of intelligence to direct, develop, and complete, unite in the recoil from doubt which sets limits to the process of destruction and the advance which marks the dawning of a new constructive age.

CHAPTER II[1]

TYPICAL ERAS OF TRANSITION

IT has been remarked in the preceding chapter that reflective thought moves in cycles. Its progress is not uninterrupted, but often between constructive eras periods of dissolution intervene, which for the time threaten the entire fabric of thought with destruction. This is true, whatever be the meaning assigned to thought. It may be taken in the sense of philosophy; and philosophy, in turn, be technically defined, for instance, as a "rational system of fundamental principles."[2] Or it may be understood in a broader way to cover those general views of the world and life to which philosophy in its stricter significance is so intimately related; to cover science and literature and art, history and politics and religion, the knowledge that a man or an age believes to have been gained, the aspirations which guide

[1] Chapter II. and parts of chaps. III.–IV. were printed in *The Methodist Review*, vols. LXXIX., LXXXI.

[2] J. H. W. Stuckenberg, *Introduction to the Study of Philosophy*, chap. I.

conduct, the institutions and their underlying beliefs which in part come down to each age from the past, in part owe their genesis to its own inherent life. In either case the truth of the cyclical character of thought-progress is apparent, although it would undoubtedly be more agreeable if the fact were otherwise. If the mind could advance by steady stages, each in turn forming the platform for a new step forward as in itself it represented the outcome of the stage preceding, much of anxiety in practical affairs would be avoided as well as much of confusion in the sphere of man's theoretical activity. But since we must be content with progress by flux and reflux, these eras of transition become subjects which at once invite inquiry and reward it.

It has also been noted that the transitional periods in human thinking possess a certain family resemblance; that within somewhat broad limits they form what the naturalist might call a genus; that they exhibit certain uniformities of development which by way of analogy, but only in this way, may be compared to the laws which science discovers in the material world. There is, however, another side to the subject, which has its abiding interest and its present value. This consists in the specific differences by which the vari-

ous transitional ages have been characterized and which give to each of them an individual, incommunicable stamp. In spite of the likeness existing among them, we must not expect to find absolute uniformity in negation, any more than it is to be looked for in positive thought. A Protagoras is not an Occam; nor could he be unless the Greece of the fifth century before Christ were exchanged for the Paris of the fourteenth century after the birth of our Lord. Francis Bacon and John Stuart Mill, to take another example from among the leaders of thought, differ so widely as to indicate a subtle variation in the spirit of the ages for which they wrote. For as with the leaders and their conclusions, so with the ages which they guide. Personal and national characteristics combine with the broader and more fundamental conditions of thought. The development of national culture, the extent of scientific attainment, the stage of political organization, the progress of social development, the character and the purity of ethical conceptions, the nature and the intensity of religious convictions — these factors in thought join with temperament and environment and history to make Sophism different from the post-Aristotelian scepticism, to distinguish the era of the Renaissance and the Reformation from

the eighteenth century, to render our own critical era at once the heir of the negations of other days and the responsible executor of its peculiar task.

The Sophistic movement in Greece was one of those phases of ancient thinking which by their typical character lend to the philosophy of antiquity its perennial charm. Since the discussions of Hegel[1] and of Grote[2] the question has been urgent whether the period should be considered one of definite scepticism; whether the Sophists have not been a much misunderstood and much maligned class of men; whether, to put the doubt most sharply, there was any substantive school of thinkers corresponding to the term. This historic doubt, furthermore, has operated to produce a juster estimate of the movement, although it is now understood that the contention of its extreme defenders went farther astray in the one direction than the traditional detraction of the critics in the other. Recent historians of philosophy recognize both the destructive character of the Sophists' work and the causes or conditions which formed their partial justification.[3] It is clear that with the latter half of the fifth century before Christ a

[1] *Geschichte der Philosophie*, vol. II., pp. 3–39.

[2] *History of Greece*, chap. LXVII.

[3] Cf. E. Zeller, *Pre-Socratic Philosophy*, vol. II., pp. 394–407, 496–506.

time had come for Greece when abstract thought and the development of the nation conspired to yield a platform for negative conclusions. The conflicts of the philosophic schools, and the agreement of many celebrated theories in the one negative result, that popular thought is delusive — facts like these had combined with the progress of culture, with political change and civil war, with critical alterations in religious belief and national habits, to generate a set of conditions of which doubt and scepticism are the natural consequences.[1]

Nevertheless, the Greek Sophistic is marked by features which cannot be ascribed to the influence of these forces alone. Most prominently the movement exhibits a thoroughness in its sceptical temper and in its destructive results which gives it an altogether remarkable stamp. It is not merely some one department of knowledge that is now brought into question, but rather the whole circle of thought; for from the perceptions of the senses to metaphysical speculation, there is nothing which does not stand condemned when tested by the criticism of the time. In fact, certain distinctions between the several spheres of human thinking on which much stress has been laid in later times, in the endeavor to determine the limits and validity

[1] Cf. chap. I., pp. 13–14, 15–16, 25.

of knowledge, were not drawn by the leaders of Sophism. The rather did they involve all knowledge in one general web of distrust, and turn their efforts to the preparation of the pupils committed to their care for success in practical life.

If inquiry be made into the causes of this prevalence of negation in the Sophistic thinking, and the similar spirit manifested by the post-Aristotelian sceptics be recalled, the suggestion is near that it was due to some general characteristic common to the Greek mind throughout the various stages of its development. Or, on the other hand, the explanation may be sought in features special to reflection at the period when Sophism had its origin. Thus it may be urged that the philosophical inheritance of the Sophists was a crude one, as was their philosophical training; and, further, that they showed a lack of intellectual and moral earnestness which, while it unfavorably distinguishes them from the doubters of certain other ages, throws a reflex light on the genesis of their doubt itself. But in the opinion of the writer, the content of Hellenic culture and the stage of intellectual development which the Greeks had reached may more justly be thought of as connected with the character of their unbelief. Not of course that this culture is to be rated low, for

it must be remembered not only that Grecian civilization remains a type of classical achievement, but also that the Sophistic age followed rather than preceded the golden period of Greek statesmanship and literature and art. It is therefore to the nature and content of Greek thinking that attention must be directed in the search for a solution of the problem. History and poetry and drama and the arts, the beginnings of philosophical speculation, something of mathematical and natural science — these Greece possessed, but no great body of reflective truth, either philosophical or scientific, which had been wrought out by the strenuous labor of generations of thinkers and accepted as proven through considerable periods of time. In this the Greece of the era under discussion was unlike both the mediæval Europe which preceded the Renaissance and the modern Europe in which the Renaissance and Reformation issued. In the first of these later ages there was a great dogmatic system, deemed the evident outcome of cogent philosophic reasoning as well as the substance of revealed truth; the second boasts a vast body of phenomenal acquisitions, welded together under the principle of natural law and approving itself alike by its verifiable accuracy and its practical usefulness. In Greece the treasures of the national

thought were of another kind. As the old ethical and religious maxims gave way before the beginnings of rational inquiry, philosophy came to embrace all the subjects of the thinking of the day. The Greeks' crude interpretations of nature, their formulas of conduct, their imaginings concerning the gods, became constituent parts of the new wisdom, with everything else of intellectual result loosely associated with these in the one thought-fabric. So when wisdom proved itself a snare, the entire outcome of thought seemed unworthy of further credence. Little of established truth remained to form the starting-point for new construction, or even, although the age was one when such prompting was peculiarly needed, to serve as a reminder that truth in any sense is attainable by man. For thought was then so young and had experienced so many vicissitudes in the course of its brief history, that the habit of belief had not become sufficiently fixed to remain a form for fresh acquisitions when the content of the old had disappeared. So the time of crisis ended in revolution, until Socrates appeared to re-create thought by basing it on a hitherto untried foundation.

The era of transition from mediæval to modern times was characterized first of all by its great magnitude. In time, the fifteenth and sixteenth

centuries are often assumed to include the entire period. But when a broader view is taken, its beginning can hardly be dated later than the end of the Crusades, or its close before the middle of the seventeenth century. In space, the events of the era spread over Western Europe from Italy to England and Scandinavia, while one principal impulse of the time, the wave of religious reform, though checked in the Latin countries of the South, transmitted its effects across the sea, and the colonies became seats of Protestant belief as well as the home of a free people. No less remarkable than the extent of the movement in time and space was the scope of its influence on human thought and the various manifestations of man's corporate life. Philosophy and science, literature and art, religion and theology, jurisprudence and politics, nay, man's entire manner of thinking about the world and his whole manner of life therein experienced changes of so momentous a character that the movement became an emancipation from the traditions and the trammels of the past. In a word, in these centuries mediævalism dies, and the modern spirit is born — the modern spirit with its free inquiry and its trust in reason, with its delight in this world, if not a certain neglect of other-worldliness, with its restless energy in opening up

the earth to the life and use of man, as well as in searching out its hidden secrets. Moreover, these various phenomena of transition were no greater than might have been argued from the magnitude of the forces at work to produce them. The imposing systems of the Scholastic philosophy had long been undergoing decay. The mediæval church by its dogmatic insistence, by its temporal pretensions, by its moral decline, had long been preparing the rejection of its supreme authority. National feeling, fostered by the new national literatures, had come in to aid the princes and the Holy Father in opposing the dominance of the Empire. Education had succeeded to the darkness of the earlier mediæval centuries; contact with the Oriental world and reviving commerce had brought in new ideas as well as unwonted comforts; art had blossomed forth in forms of wondrous beauty; the great inventions had furthered the progress of the new learning as well as broken the force of mediæval custom; the great discoveries had enlarged the mental horizon, besides revealing the existence of unknown lands beyond the sea. As great as was the difference between the forms of thought and life which we term mediæval and modern, so great were the forces of change in the centuries which at once divided and connected the two eras.

In view of these conditions, it is a striking fact about the movement that it included so much of positive thought.[1] Men abandoned mediævalism, but they did not therefore adopt a negative view of the world. The revolution, despite its magnitude, did not issue in chaos; great as were the changes in belief, secular and religious, entire rejection of belief in the main was not the outcome. Rather, with a confidence which distinguishes the era alike from some earlier and from some later periods of transition, it was felt that the things which had been discarded were to be replaced by constructions with an analogous purpose, though of a different sort. It is not intended, of course, to ignore, or even to minimize, the facts which would resist arrangement under this rubric. No such era of transition can pass without anxiety and doubt and sceptical despair. Religious decline and moral disaster are also among the results which these periods seem inevitably to imply. And the centuries of transition from the mediæval to the modern world form no exception to the rule. If attention be directed to the decay of conviction which accompanied the decline of the Scholastic thinking, or to the ethical and spiritual declension

[1] Cf. H. Höffding, *History of Modern Philosophy* (Eng. trans.), vol. I., p. 1.

of the later mediæval church, or to the gropings and the conflicts through which the Reformation fought its way to victory, not now to enumerate concrete examples of sceptical opinion, no one will be disposed to deny that the period under discussion, in this respect as in others, conforms to the general law.

But two features of the movement always occasion surprise, and both point toward the conclusion that has just been stated. In the first place, it is remarkable how many elements of mediævalism survive in the thought of the transitional age and how long they retain their place in the beginnings of modern reflection. Hence arises a problem of some magnitude for the historian of opinion. For the difficulty of drawing a line of division between the middle ages and modern times presses even more hardly upon him than it does upon the historian of events, until, as he finds his limit moving farther and farther on, he is tempted to believe that many modern thinkers have remained half mediæval down to the immediate forerunners of contemporary movements. In the era of transition proper, and the period immediately succeeding, this characteristic of the time reached its salient development. Of the truth at large theology offers an instructive illustration, for it

has often been remarked that the revolution in religion involved the substitution of one form of authority for another rather than the rejection of the traditional principle of authority altogether. From the speculative philosophy and science of the era it would be easy to cite instances of a specific as well as of a general kind, among which none would be more striking, perhaps, than the appearance of elements inherited from the older thinking even in the systems of the leaders who began the work of modern reflection.[1]

In explanation of this tendency toward survival, it is essential to remember that no era of transition exhibits an abrupt and entire rupture with the past. However novel the reflection of the later time may be, however revolutionary its spirit and its aims, it cannot escape connection with earlier

[1] So Bacon centred his method of inductive inquiry about the search for "forms," a word which recalls the terminology of the Aristotelian metaphysic, and even to some extent its underlying ideas. Cf. T. Fowler, *Bacon's Novum Organum*, Introduction, § 8, and R. L. Ellis, *Works of Francis Bacon* (Spedding, Ellis and Heath) Preface to Philosophical Works (8). And Descartes, who started from universal doubt, based certitude, when gained, upon the divine veracity as well as upon the principle of self-consciousness, arguing the existence of the veracious God the while by proofs which at many points betray a distinctly mediæval ancestry. *Discours de la Méthode*, IV.; *Méditations*, III.–V. (and the *Réponses aux Secondes Objections: Raisons*, etc. — cf. Veitch's translation, Appendix); *Principes de la Philosophie*, I., 13–47.

forms of thought, since these have been the lineal predecessors of its own speculative venture and, at very least in a negative way, have determined its point of departure. If only in order to repudiate them, the transitional movement must take account of the ideas and principles which in the past have formed the staple elements of doctrine; and such association is certain to leave its mark upon the newer thinking, even when the latter is based upon a denial of conclusions hitherto believed established. There exists, moreover, in ages of transition a disposition on the part of those who shrink from the extreme results of destructive criticism to revive positions taken from older systems;[1] and this tendency, which is common to many different eras, was furthered in the period immediately under consideration by the special circumstances of the time. For the revolt from mediævalism, like the culture of the middle age itself, was often rooted in memories of the past. As the civilization of the mediæval world, when the barbarism of the darkest centuries had begun to yield, in part grew up about the remnants of classical institutions lingering on in ideal conception or fragmentary reality, so the fuller acquaintance with ancient thought and life which was fostered by the revival

[1] Cf. chap. IV., pp. 132 ff.

of letters forged an indissoluble link between the Renaissance and antiquity. Thus the return to older doctrines was inspired by stronger motives than those which commonly prevail. It was not in this instance a mere recoil from present distress to conclusions which under more fortunate conditions had been discarded as defective or outgrown; for to many minds the elements of antiquity that gained an entrance into the culture of the age seemed living principles from a classic world now happily revealed to supply the foundation for the life of a new Europe. The literature and art of Greece and Rome, their political institutions, their religion, their philosophy, had lessons for fifteenth-century Italy and Germany, because they were deemed freer, better, profounder, and more true than the rude and barren civilization which had satisfied the mind of Western Europe a short time before.

In spite, however, of the mingling of old and new, the transition from the mediæval to the modern world involved in literal truth a new birth of culture, a renewal of the European spirit, not so much in continuation of the transitional movement and developed from it, as produced by the same set of causes to which the latter owed its genesis. Therefore this first characteristic of the thinking

of the time was less significant than a second, which remains to be noticed — the rapidity and decision with which the leaders of the age go on from their negative to their positive work. Destruction is not completed before construction is begun. Or, more accurately, it is destruction which involves construction, at least if the era and its various phases be regarded in a large and comprehensive way. When the dogmatic faith of the old order is abandoned in favor of reason, it is because reason demands her rights as an authoritative guide, not merely because the two yield results of a conflicting kind. The "handmaid of theology" does not revolt in order that she may cease from her labors or relinquish her claims, but, to adopt the common phrase, in order that she "may set up a house of her own." The new science believes itself a better way of looking at the world substituted for one outgrown, even when it is not definitely associated with speculative doctrines. Consider the long line of natural investigators from Roger Bacon to Kepler and Galileo, or even to Boyle and Newton, and note how widely spread among them is the conviction that, in doing away with a fantastic system of speculation, they are replacing it with a positive study — often they term it a philosophy — of the real world. Bruno and his Italian compeers aston-

ish the later modern mind by their strange mixture of modern naturalistic tendencies and æsthetic longings and recollections of ancient philosophemes. Kepler's discovery of the laws of planetary motion is described by a recent historian of philosophy as "the outcome of his endeavors to find an exact foundation for his theory of the world";[1] while in a phrase which startles us by its anticipation of a famous watchword of the later time — though of course the resemblance must not be pressed — Lord Bacon summons men back from the abstractions of the schools to the study of things themselves.

But perhaps the most impressive example of the spirit is to be found in the mutations of theological opinion. Wherever we strike into the stream of religious change, how plain it is that the movement is in fact a reformation of faith and practice, rather than an abandonment of them. Luther, once an Augustinian monk, becomes the lion-hearted leader of reform. Mysticism is a subordinate trait in his character, if not as some would have it the mainspring of his religious experience. The movement also which Luther heads, in spite of its divergence from the ancient forms, is aglow with fervor, pulsating under the influence of a deep spiritual life.

[1] Falckenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

And yet how impossible it is for leader or for church to dispense with dogma. In the man the heroic temper is so centred about doctrinal forms that he insists upon the literal interpretation of the Eucharistic formula, even to the detriment of the cause which he has at heart and to the point of alienation from his natural allies.[1] The church must have its doctrinal symbols, so gentle Melanchthon begins the task — a task continued by many successors in various branches of the Protestant body until the middle of the next century, the seventeenth, brings the great cycle of creed formation to a close. Or add to the creeds, in which the belief of the new church obtained its needed symbolic expression, the more detailed work of the systematic theologians, and the question becomes pertinent, whether in the history of post-Reformation thinking there is anything more sad than the transformation of the living faith into that "new Scholasticism" which by its rigidity, not to say its frigidity, has in the sequel laid so many burdens on heart and reason both.

The negative tendencies in thought which marked the eighteenth century in Europe may be considered in two different ways. These movements may be discussed in the large, as they manifest themselves

[1] Cf. G. P. Fisher, *History of the Reformation*, pp. 147–153.

in Britain, as they reach the climax of their influence in France, as they find their parallels on German soil; and thus the entire century be viewed as a century of illumination divided into its English, French, and German developments. But while it can scarcely be doubted that this way of looking at the subject is more just, as well as more comprehensive, than it is to concentrate attention on a part of the whole, the alternative method will better serve the purpose of this inquiry. Instead, therefore, of endeavoring to compass the entire movement in one general survey, we may follow the example of many historians and study the Enlightenment chiefly as it culminates in France. Here the movement will be found modified through the influence of circumstances due to the condition of the French nation at the time, and through the introduction of elements dependent on the nature of the Gallic mind. But as it is often these very characteristics that best repay investigation, there need be no regret for either their existence or their prominence.

The story of the French Illumination has often been told. The elements of the doctrine come from across the Channel.[1] Acquaintance with English governmental forms moulds the political wisdom of

[1] Falckenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 241–245.

Montesquieu. Voltaire is active in spreading the fame of Locke and Newton, as well as in securing acceptance for their fundamental ideas. Diderot translates the ethics of Shaftesbury. By many hands a potent religious ferment is introduced in the doctrines of the Deistic school. And once entered, these excitants fit in with forces already working, since the condition and the temper of the nation were such that the way was prepared for the development of negative movements. The miseries of the financial situation; the tension between the people and the upper classes in society; the luxury in high places; the misgovernment and corruption in church and state alike; the unbelief on the part of official representatives of the ecclesiastical body, coupled with the repression of free inquiry — the facts do not need elaboration here, they may simply be mentioned as the legitimate conditions of the first of the distinctive features by which the thought of the age was marked.

This first characteristic of the movement may be described as the aggressive spirit of the leaders. It was not merely that their work was destructive, a general attack on the established order, for this was but one of the factors in the aggressiveness in question. Nor was it simply a determined assault on corruption wherever this had made its way into

the organism of society. Such assaults have not been wanting in other eras of transition; for example, in the sixteenth century, when the Reformers endeavored to lop off the foul excrescences that were stifling the life of the church, and Luther in particular dealt bitter as well as vigorous blows after his allegiance to the papal organization had been shaken. But the hesitancy of Luther's approach to the point at which such acts of opposition became possible for him, may be taken as a sign of the difference in temper between the men of his day and the protagonists of the eighteenth-century conflict. In how few of the latter is there evident any hesitation in throwing off the trammels of church connection, or in revolting against established institutions. How nearly universal with them is a certain vindictive mood which neither feels regret for that which has been discarded, nor shrinks from mocking, from lampooning, from vilifying things by other men held sacred. It is not a crusade that these writers are engaged in, but an expedition against a pirate crew. Their enemy is not merely in error, he is outlaw. In politics it is revolt against tyranny; in letters, resistance to oppression; in religion the cry goes up for the "destruction of the Infamous." It is easy to recognize in the disposition of the French thinkers the spirit of men who have been

jailed or exiled for their opinions, albeit their anger is sometimes accentuated by the peculiar nature of the sufferers; of men who have seen their writings put under the ban of the censorship; of men who have sympathized with poor wretches broken on the wheel for crimes falsely charged against them in the sacred name of religion. If it were not for the unworthy character of some of its exponents, it might almost be termed the spirit of France as she rouses herself for vengeance on a degenerate ruling class, a reactionary government, and a church which stands athwart the course of progress, while, corrupt at heart, it is incapable of accomplishing its practical tasks.

In part connected with their aggressiveness, in part due to other causes, was the satisfaction of the leaders of the Enlightenment with their own theories. In revolting from accepted philosophical principles and political systems, as in rejecting the traditional faith, they felt implicit confidence in the results of the new thinking. Reason in their view was destined at once to usher in a better age of the world. Error was to disappear, and with error tyranny, the departure of the twin evils to be followed by a universal deliverance from disorder in society and from misery in the individual life. If the special characteristic of ancient Sophism was the complete-

ness of its negation, and the era of the Renaissance and the Reformation was distinguished by the tendency to replace discarded principles or institutions by others conceived in a spirit favorable to the ends which the older growths had been expected to promote, though hostile to the forms which they had historically assumed, the dominant idea of the thinkers of the pre-Revolutionary epoch was the supreme value of the substitutes proposed by them for the objects of their destructive attacks. The later modern age, looking backward across the Revolution and the Terror, finds difficulty in realizing this naïve confidence, but it is indisputable that a century and a half ago it was a leading feature in the thinking of the time. Even when they reach conclusions destructive at once to accepted forms of thought and to the recognized postulates of ethical and social life, the *philosophes* believe that they are removing obstacles to the highest development of the human spirit. Toward the close of the movement, when materialism, sometimes in its most naked form, has proved the outcome, they exult in the delusion that now at length the vagaries of the past have given place to the beneficent workings of untrammelled reason. With as much delight as Voltaire had scourged the church, the later adherents of the movement maintain the negative of

every form of spiritual philosophy, of every elevated doctrine of ethics, of every least manifestation of positive religious belief. Holbach, for example, in the *System of Nature*,[1] makes the discovery that it is the theological view of the world which is chiefly responsible for all the error, oppression, and misery that have burdened the human race. Then he descants complacently on naturalistic materialism as the source of all wisdom and virtue; until the reader is fain to believe that, since the time when Epicurus sought to sweeten human existence by denying immortality and relegating the gods to a life of inglorious ease apart from intervention in mundane affairs, there has hardly been a more gross misunderstanding of the facts of nature as well as of the needs of the soul.

In part this complacency, as just remarked, was fostered by the intensity of the spirit of revolt. In larger measure it was dependent on other causes, which have been variously estimated by different historians of opinion. Hegel, in a brief but eloquent passage which voices the conclusions of other thinkers not a few, accounted for the enthusiastic optimism of the epoch by the fact that now for the first time in the history of the world reason had been given its rightful place as the

[1] *Système de la Nature*, 1770.

organizer of spiritual reality.[1] Greater stress is laid by various critics of the movement on the native tendency of thought in France, starting from a given premise or a few such, perspicuously and neatly, though with a certain lack of depth in thinking, to transform the accepted theory of the world and human life.[2] Important also was the lack of historic insight into the origin and growth of human institutions which formed so marked a characteristic of eighteenth-century reflection and made it an easy prey to the passion for reform by means of artificial re-creation.[3]

More special in their influence, though at the lowest estimate no less effective, were the progress of natural science, by this time secure in the enjoyment of a systematic development, and the conclusions concerning ultimate questions deduced from the results of scientific investigation by thinkers of the speculative type.[4] Long ere this, it is true, science had given evidence of its power to control modern thinking. In the exchange of the mediæval for the modern spirit it had been potent, both

[1] *Philosophie der Geschichte* (2d ed., 1840), pp. 535–536.

[2] Cf. Falckenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 81–85.

[3] Cf. chap. IV., pp. 146-152.

[4] According to Taine (*Ancient Régime*, Bk. III.) the "classic spirit," with its insistence on style and its fondness for abstractions, formed the mould in which the results of science were fused

in the sphere of method and by way of result. Bacon and the methodologists had set before the world the ideal of an accurate and progressive acquaintance with empirical reality. Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, and the rest had made discoveries of such scope and import as to revolutionize men's views of the natural universe. And yet, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, or even in the first half of the seventeenth, the scientific view of the world was far less advanced on its way toward completion than it was in the period of the Illumination, and the philosophical explanation which the outcome of science suggests far less compacted into a constructive force. In the later era, especially after Voltaire's advocacy of the Newtonian system in France, they played a foremost part in the development of opinion. Negatively they undermined traditional doctrines in every department of thought; on the positive side they stood ready with principles of broad scope and alluring promise, as well as with far-reaching implications of their

into a revolutionary force: "To pursue in every research, with the utmost confidence, without either reserve or precaution, the mathematical method; to derive, limit, and isolate a few of the simplest generalized notions; and then, setting experience aside, comparing them, combining them, and, from the artificial compound thus obtained, deducing all the consequences they involve by pure reasoning, is the natural process of the classic spirit" (p. 201).

own. Thus the elements of the mechanical theory took their places not merely as parts of a new science of phenomena, but as constituent factors in a new metaphysic, which was deemed as trustworthy and certain as the empirical principles from which it was inferred. As the period wore on, moreover, the discoveries of the physicians, physiologists, and natural historians encouraged the extension of mechanical and materialistic hypotheses to cover the facts of mental, and even of moral life, these having been already reduced to the lowest possible terms by the sensationalistic philosophy which believed itself the legitimate development of the empiricism of Locke. Hence, at the very time when she was being called upon to revolutionize the world, reason found herself better furnished with grounds for confidence in the scope of her own powers than had ever been the case with her before. The light of science shone so bright that, dazzled by its beams, men dreamed thought capable of giving them immediate success in their endeavors to reconstruct the foundations of Western culture. In particular, the scientific form of reflection presented great attractions to a people just breaking free from the constraints of long-accepted dogma in matters temporal and spiritual alike, and so inclined to look upon the chief instru-

ment of its emancipation as fitted to provide a substitute for the system it was seeking to destroy.

It is also to be noted that in the France of the eighteenth century the influence of scientific conclusions, and even of their materialistic corollaries, was heightened by the relation of science to great practical needs. A century and a quarter earlier Bacon had delighted in forecasts of the good to accrue to man from the mastery over nature which comes alone from understanding her and from obedience to her ways. Now the Encyclopædists labored to make the vision real by placing the results of scientific inquiry at the disposal of agriculture and industry and commerce, in a word, at the disposal of the citizens of their native land. Diderot, the editor of the *Encyclopædia*, spared no time or effort to make the great work more fitted to aid in the economic recovery of the nation.[1] Remembering his own humble origin, perhaps, and moved by compassion for the lower classes in society, this remarkable editor-in-chief would spend days in mastering the processes of some trade or in securing a picture of some machine, that later in the printed book he might explain the useful art to the people, struggling under their financial burdens. And whether or not the story be accepted that the

[1] See J. Morley, *Diderot and the Encyclopædists*, chap. V.

enterprise made impression even on the king and the royal circle, when they discovered in the work the explanation of objects familiar to them in their daily lives, it is certain that its adaptation to practical wants was a potent factor in its final success. The case is similar, also, in regard to the entire movement which the *Encyclopædia* represented. The industrial and economic condition of France at the time was such as to require the clearest exposition of scientific principles attainable, and their most definite application to concrete problems. This state of affairs reinforced the predilection of the philosophers for the results of scientific investigation. Hence, too, the leaders of the movement were more ready to accept the naturalistic theory of things for themselves, and found lesser minds to whom it was communicated through their labors the more willing to give it a sympathetic welcome. The capital error lay in the assumption that such material could nourish minds and hearts, as well as serve the ends of physical existence. Yet even this mistake is half comprehensible, if it be remembered how crucial the need then was for relief for the body as well as for the soul, and how plainly the principles which were bringing promise of physical help conflicted with positions hitherto believed essential to the spiritual life.

In certain respects the present age is of a different type from any of the eras of doubt and transition that have preceded it. In particular, a situation of especial difficulty has been created by the complexity of the questions with which the reflection of the time is compelled to grapple; the crisis has become acute because of the multitude of conflicting tendencies which have entered in to confuse our thought. For we are still moderns. The cycle which began with the Renaissance and the Reformation is not yet ended. In spite of the revolution which took place at the end of the eighteenth century, men are still at work on questions come down from the age of Bacon and Descartes. The problems concerning knowledge which were then proposed have not received their definitive solution, nor can they be passed over as the unimportant questionings of an outgrown stage of culture. The mechanical theory of the world remains a crux for the advocates of a spiritual philosophy and the defenders of positive religious faith. Pantheism and atomism, monism and dualism, continue to engage the attention of philosophic minds under somewhat of the old inspiration, if not under the old leaders. As the nineteenth century closes and the twentieth begins, the Christian

world resounds with the Reformers' question concerning the seat of authority in religion. Moreover, the thinker of to-day is not only caught in the current of modern thought as a whole, but is embarrassed by the fact that the breaking-up of the eighteenth century was not brought to its term. Hume has lived on in the empiricism of the first half of the nineteenth century in Britain and the agnosticism of the generation just ended in many different lands. In Germany the negation of the eighteenth century was overwhelmed by the constructive systems with which the early decades of the nineteenth were filled. But these in turn went down so decisively before the onslaught of the empirical and the historical sciences as to throw men back on the difficulties, sometimes even back on the solutions, which Kant and Hegel and Schleiermacher believed they had forever put away. While this phase terminated and recovery began, it was discovered that there was left neither satisfactory system nor acceptable guiding principle for thought. It is evident, also, that the era has its peculiar problems, sometimes in the form of characteristic variations of older questions, sometimes of specifically new developments. There is the marvellous advance of physi-

cal science, with such discoveries as that of the conservation and correlation of energy and that of biological evolution, and such theories as the principle of development conceived as a world-law; there is the growth of the historical spirit and the application of the historical method to the question of origins, in particular to the origin of religion; there is the development of critical inquiry, especially in relation to the documentary records of Christianity; there is the progress of democracy, not only in its moderate and lawful, but also in its socialistic and anarchistic phases — and all press on the thinker of to-day with questions as imperiously demanding answers as the answers are difficult to give. To whatever quarter therefore we direct our gaze, it is plain that the age is filled with uncertainty and travail. Our task is harder than that of our fellows in other times, for we are burdened with a double load. We are trying to do two days' work in one. We are struggling with difficulties inherited from the past and with new perplexities born of our own intellectual life.

One principal result of this confusion is a certain mingling of parties, or even of conflicting elements within the limits of a single system. Most nearly pure, perhaps, is that phase of

thought which is termed positivism, or agnosticism. Arguing it impossible to make any rational decision concerning transcendent questions, and by profession, at least, holding the results of science true in the phenomenal sense alone and subject to constant revision, this form of thought claims to confine its conclusions to the region of strictly verifiable truth. Nevertheless, a moment's reflection will convince the student of the history of opinion how far removed these views are from those earlier types of thinking with which it is natural to compare them. Take the positions of Huxley, for example, and compare them with the doctrines of Protagoras or Gorgias, not to say the theories of Pyrrho and his followers, and it will be seen that the difference between the scepticism of the Greeks and the agnosticism of to-day is measured by the extent of that imposing edifice of predictable fact and verifiable law which nowadays is termed preëminently science. For, at its lowest terms, the negation of the time includes so much of affirmation as is contained in the belief in a science of phenomena. But the possibility of making scientifically tenable assertions of any sort was denied by the ancient sceptics. Fact which by definition should be fact for more than the time, the place, and the indi-

vidual in the given circumstances, was rejected out of hand; much more would the assumption of a body of phenomenal uniformities of existence or of action have received their utter condemnation. The contrast, further, becomes more striking, if we turn from the empirical basis of agnosticism to the dogmatic views so frequently associated with it. For the limitation of the conclusions of inductive investigation to their phenomenal interpretation is apparently as difficult as the restriction of agnostic views concerning the transcendent world to a mere not-proven. On the one hand, consciously or unconsciously, science tends toward the erection of its principles into a metaphysics of the sensible world; on the other, it is often felt that this position is best introduced by a negative preamble concerning supersensible reality. Thus contemporary opinion issues in one of the most surprising combinations in the history of human thinking, a dogmatic science of the finite joined in ill-assorted union with a denial of the possibility of ascertaining aught of absolute truth, or with the doctrine that an Absolute exists, but beyond the fact of its existence nothing further can be known.

And yet these inconsistencies in the spirit of the age are among its most significant character-

istics. The Athenians of the fifth century before the Christian era, amid the wreck of thought, looked on truth as a mere sounding name; two millenniums later, the leaders of the Reforming age destroyed accepted principles and institutions to erect others in their room; the unbelief of the eighteenth century was confident of the validity of its reasonings, whether of a negative or positive kind, and content with their meagre and barren outcome as a substitute for the traditional systems of intellectual and spiritual truth. The negative reflection of the present age differs from each of these. It is certain of one thing, physical science. It is hesitant or sceptical about most things else, and so unfitted to rear a new habitation for the soul. It is often conscious, however, of the deeper needs of the human spirit, therefore profoundly dissatisfied with the results of its own labors. It is noteworthy, moreover, that a certain cumulative relation exists among these several features of contemporary thought. The certainty of its conclusions in regard to one set of questions has proved a pregnant cause of doubt concerning principles of other types; for it is evident that one most fruitful source of agnostic views has been the contrast between the difficulties of transcendent speculation and the success which has attended

the empirical investigation of natural phenomena. The lack of positive opinions on the fundamental problems of the world and the ultimate issues of life, — except in the case of those who still think to find in science pure and simple ample satisfaction for all the demands of the soul, — breeds in nobler minds a spirit of resolute renunciation or of bitter despair.

On the practical side this saddened mood is almost as marked as the dubitative tone of thought in relation to matters of theoretical importance. Melancholy is the frequent portion of earnest souls in periods of intellectual ferment, as they look out upon the destruction of principles inwoven with the fabric of culture and dear to them in their individual lives, or strenuously contend for new conclusions fitted to take the places of those which must be abandoned.[1] But in this age it has so thoroughly pervaded the literature as well as the reflection of the time, that it has become more prominent than in any other era since the long centuries of agony which witnessed the downfall of the ancient world. In defending this estimate, the difficulty is not to find citations which confirm it, but to make a selection from the multitude of examples that have given color to the thought

[1] Cf. chap. I., pp. 17–23, 29 ff.

of recent years. Matthew Arnold, brooding, walks the Oxford uplands,[1] or muses at the Grande Chartreuse: —

"Not as their friend, or child, I speak!
But as, on some far northern strand,
Thinking of his own Gods, a Greek
In pity and mournful awe might stand
Before some fallen Runic stone —
For both were faiths, and both are gone."[2]

Lowell visits Chartres "to give to Fancy one clear holiday," but finds himself pursued by thoughts of —

"This age that blots out life with question-marks,
This nineteenth century with its knife and glass
That make thought physical, and thrust far off
The Heaven, so neighborly with man of old,
To voids sparse-sown with alienated stars."[3]

Clifford laments the loss of faith in God, since for him "the Great Companion is dead."[4] Romanes, who in later life regained the spiritual conviction which twenty years before he had relinquished, at the close of his earlier work voices in words of pathetic beauty the grief of yielding obedience to the imperative demands of sceptical thought: —

[1] See "The Scholar-Gipsy" and "Thyrsis."
[2] "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse."
[3] "The Cathedral."
[4] *Lectures and Essays* (1879), vol. II., p. 247.

"And forasmuch as I am far from being able to agree with those who affirm that the twilight doctrine of the 'new faith' is a desirable substitute for the waning splendor of 'the old,' I am not ashamed to confess that with this virtual negation of God the universe to me has lost its soul of loveliness; and although from henceforth the precept 'to work while it is day' will doubtless but gain an intensified force from the terribly intensified meaning of the words that 'the night cometh when no man can work,' yet when at times I think, as think at times I must, of the appalling contrast between the hallowed glory of that creed which once was mine, and the lonely mystery of existence as now I find it, — at such times I shall ever feel it impossible to avoid the sharpest pang of which my nature is susceptible." [1]

And Spencer, criticizing Mr. Balfour's eloquent summons to belief,[2] has formulated in one of the noblest passages that has ever proceeded from his pen the reasons which constrain our negative thinkers to adhere to their dreary creed: —

"It is not that they *wish* to do this, but that they *must:* self-deception is the alternative. There is no

[1] *A Candid Examination of Theism*, 1878 (published under the pseudonym, Physicus), p. 114; cf. chap. VI., p. 241.

[2] *The Foundations of Belief;* cf. chap. VI., p. 241.

pleasure in the consciousness of being an infinitesimal bubble on a globe that is itself infinitesimal compared with the totality of things. Those on whom the unpitying rush of changes inflicts sufferings which are often without remedy, find no consolation in the thought that they are at the mercy of blind forces which cause, indifferently, now the destruction of a sun and now the death of an animalcule. Contemplation of a universe which is without conceivable beginning or end, and without intelligible purpose, yields them no satisfaction. The desire to know what it all means is no less strong in the agnostic than in others, and raises sympathy with them. Failing utterly to find any interpretation himself, he feels a regretful inability to accept the interpretation they offer." [1]

Connected with this mood of spiritual discontent — connected with it in part as among its causes, in part, also, by way of effect — is the ingrained moral seriousness by which much of recent thinking has been marked. Attention has lately been called anew to the dissatisfaction of the time with its own unbelief and to its earnest purpose as signs of promise for the coming age.[2] And the prophecy seems well founded,

[1] *Fortnightly Review*, June, 1895, p. 873.

[2] Henry van Dyke, *The Gospel for an Age of Doubt*, pp. 22–40.

since practical disillusionment and spiritual longing are characteristic of negative movements when their influence is beginning to wane, and attempts at constructive work to reappear.[1] But the present writer would fain go farther, and find in the ethical spirit of recent scepticism not merely the reaction from the practical effects of doubt, but an element in the thought of the time which lifts it to a nobler level than the majority of the transitional eras which have preceded it have attained. At least among thinkers of the English-speaking race, there has been manifested in this age a moral seriousness, sometimes a religious spirit, which favorably distinguish them from the doubters of other days. John Stuart Mill, and Spencer, and Huxley, and John Fiske, — not now to speak of the poets and the novelists of doubt, — how superior they rise to Hume with his cynic sneer, to the militant materialism of the later French Illumination, or even to the complacency of the members of the Deistic school. The difference is as great in its way as that between the fox-hunting parson or the frivolous abbé of the earlier age and the devoted Christian worker of the present time, as that which separates the religious formalism of the eighteenth-century church from the missionary spirit of the church to-day.

[1] Cf. chap. I., pp. 17–23, 32 ff.

Nor is the conclusion weakened by the fact that the moral systems and the religious inferences of our free-thinkers rest on foundations hitherto considered insufficient to support the spiritual edifice. On the contrary, the discordance between premise and conclusion, as previous ages have construed the argument, is the best evidence of the truth at large. Despite the mordant character of their doubt, it proves that the negative thinkers of the time are peculiarly sensitive to the claims of the spiritual nature, that they are animated by a constructive impulse in matters of morals and of faith, even when the principles from which they start constrain them to reach results which are for the most part meagre, in some instances little better than grotesque. It shows also the case in regard to the matters of the spirit akin to the situation in the affairs of the mind. Along with the most searching criticism and the most destructive speculation, there is manifested in the one field as in the other a certain conservative tendency which delivers the era from the utter negation of other days. In the face of fiercer questionings and deeper gloom than commonly fall to the lot of mankind, amid problems so perplexing that the abandonment of the attempt to think has once more been hailed as the logical issue of all reflective inquiry, there remain

on the side of intellect a growing inheritance of knowledge based upon proved truth, and in the sphere of practice an unquenchable spiritual aspiration, stronger than doubt, which leads our sceptics beyond the narrow limits of their theoretical creed. Progress there is, therefore, even in negation, and hope for the future of thought, although its latest crisis, from which the world is just beginning to emerge, has proved so grave. In the next succeeding chapter it will be in part our task to trace out the course by which an intellectual movement that is commonly counted chief among the destructive forces has come to make contribution to the cause of positive truth.

CHAPTER III

SCIENCE AND DOUBT

ACCORDING to a conviction which is cherished alike by scientific thinkers and by the popular mind, natural science is superior to the vicissitudes which beset the progress of other, less favored forms of thought. The subjects of scientific inquiry are such that it is possible to reach precise conclusions concerning them. The methods of scientific investigation, and the care with which they are exercised, guarantee the procedure of science against disturbing errors. The continuity of scientific progress proves that the demands which may be legitimately made upon the leaders of science have been met in the past, and that they are constantly being met, to a degree which leaves no room for transitions in opinion like those which are common to thought in its historical, political, or social, its philosophical and theological developments.

When this estimate is taken in a literal sense, it is easy to see that it is an exaggeration. There is

no need to appeal to the enemies of science in order to show that it is overdrawn; for those scientific investigators who have most deeply penetrated into the principles which lie at the basis of their favorite pursuit have in many instances been the most ready to recognize the fallibility of their conclusions, while now and again from out the ranks of science itself a reminder has come of the waste and wreckage of hypothesis and theory which are involved in the progress of inquiry.[1] Thinkers of a shallower sort, and little acquainted with either the history or the logical foundations of the knowledge which they vaunt, forget that this progress implies not only the well-considered advance into fields of inquiry where the facts have hitherto baffled less instructed or less fortunate searchers after truth, but also the rejection of explanations of phenomena hitherto defended in opposition to theories now established, or even the overthrow of principles formerly accepted as beyond the possibility of question. The Ptolemaic and the Copernican astronomy, the atomic analysis

[1] *E.g.* H. A. Rowland, "The Highest Aim of the Physicist," *American Journal of Science*, vol. VIII. (4th Series), 1899, pp. 401–411; S. P. Langley, "The Laws of Nature," *Science*, New York, June 13, 1902, pp. 921–927. Cf. also G. Fred. Wright, "The Civil Wars of Science," *The Independent*, New York, Sept. 18, 1890, pp. 4–5.

of matter, phlogiston and the anti-phlogistic theory, the emission theory and the undulatory theory of light, catastrophic and uniformitarian geology, the creation and the development of species — the annals of science from the dawn of modern times down to the present day (Darwinism, neo-Darwinism, and neo-Lamarckism, Weismannism and anti-Weismannism, the transmission of disease from animal to man, the nature of nervous action) teem with the records of controversies in which the establishment of one alternative has meant the overthrow of views held in honor by representative scientific authorities, and not infrequently the destruction of theories long believed to be demonstrated.

The advantage of science, therefore, in comparison with other types of reflection, does not consist in entire freedom from the infirmities of human thinking. Its superiority depends rather upon the greater degree of accuracy and stability which it attains than upon an absolute immunity from error. Fallible it is, like every other product of human intelligence; but apart from the strictly formal disciplines, it is the most nearly certain knowledge that we possess. So excellent, indeed, are its methods and so definite its results, so almost uninterrupted has been its progress, so

confidently may it be expected not to return upon its steps, even when some new advance necessitates the abandonment of conclusions once universally accepted, that for the modern mind, which alone has known it in its typical development, science has justly become the standard of reference by comparison with which the reliability and the precision of other forms of thought may be tested.

In relation to changes in opinion science has a further advantage: by itself alone it effects no revolutions in the world of thought. This, however, must not be interpreted to mean that it plays no part in the development of opinion. The attempt has often been made to establish an abstract separation between science and philosophy, or science and theology, or science and faith. But the artificial hypotheses that have been framed in support of the division have by their futility betrayed an unsoundness in the argument which might have been discovered by close examination, even before they had been put to the test of use. In spite of the fact that science, according to its proper definition, deals with phenomena alone, and the laws of phenomenal existence, the time is happily past in which it was possible for philosophy to prosecute its researches in neglect of the materials for speculative reflection that science

brings to light. Faith moves in a region of spiritual aspiration differing in much from the sphere of the purely theoretical intellect, and it breathes a different air, but the church that ignores the bearings of discovery upon the principles of religion does so at the risk of worse than intellectual disaster. It alienates seekers after truth in fields other than its own from belief in the spiritual realities. It imperils its own conclusions by neglecting the changes in the body of empirical fact, on which in part its tenets depend. The non-scientific forms of thought, it is true, have their rights as well as science proper. Since they are in possession of independent sources of evidence, and include principles not a few that have been confirmed by long experience, it is often legitimate, in some instances imperative, for them to assume a conservative attitude toward the results of scientific inquiry. Of right they may demand that views presented for their acceptance shall be supported by a preponderant weight of evidence; and when the task of bringing the new truth and the old into adjustment is laid upon them, they may reasonably proceed with more of deliberate caution than is necessary where there is no responsibility in regard to the practical implications of the principles which may be adopted. In the end,

however, they must assent to the truths which science reveals; and when the relation between the several departments of knowledge is of a healthy kind, they will welcome the outcome of scientific inquiry in no reluctant or unwilling spirit. By every line of argument, therefore, the endeavor to keep science and philosophy, or science and religion, in strict isolation the one from the other, is shown to be idle, if not unworthy. There is no more ground for the attempt at an absolute divorce than there is for the opposite demand, that non-scientific reflection should be brought into immediate and exact conformity to every detail of scientific method and result.

How, then, does it appear that science is not the force immediately at work in the production of intellectual crises? If it bears upon political and social development, if its relations to philosophy and theology are still more close and intimate, why is it not to be counted among the phases of thinking which directly share in revolutionary movements? Chiefly for two reasons. First, because science, at least up to the present time, has never so completely engrossed the interest of man that its own internal variations have in any given case amounted to a direct and entire reversal of the substance of ideal opinion. Thinkers there are in

considerable numbers who predict that the reduction of human culture to an exclusively scientific basis is certain to come in the future, and some who with confidence proclaim the new gospel to their fellows, imagining that they have brought their own lives down to this level and have found their happiness in the fact. But whatever be the truth or error involved in the prophecy, it is a certain matter of record that hitherto mankind has been far from finding the springs of its life entirely in the pursuit of scientific aims or the exclusive content of its convictions, intellectual and spiritual alike, in conclusions reached through the medium of scientific investigation. For this reason many of the deductions of science are indifferent or neutral in so far as ultimate principles are in question. They formulate new discoveries in regard to the facts or the laws of the natural world; often they further man's welfare or better the conditions of his existence: but since of themselves they suggest no inferences beyond the bounds of empirical nature, they may be left out of account when the issues of deeper import are at stake. Other scientific results do affect the decision of fundamental problems. But their influence, as has already been suggested and as we shall shortly have occasion to discuss the matter

in greater detail, is for the most part an indirect one. They alter the view of the physical world which in the light of previous knowledge had been accepted as correct; they affect the analysis of the mental life, which in part must be taken as the foundation for our beliefs concerning spiritual verities; they change the current theories of political and social organization into new forms and statements; they render necessary the revision of philosophical and theological principles to conform to the newly discovered facts. These effects, however, they accomplish not so much by their action within their own field as in virtue of the relations which science sustains to other departments of thought. Therefore in the opening chapter of this treatise, we were able with justice to conclude that the precise character of a transitional era of science must remain unknown until reflection shall have so entirely taken on the scientific cast that an upheaval in the realm of science shall be equivalent to a revolution in thought at large.[1]

Prior to such a development of culture, it would be impossible to determine aught but a few of the most general features of a scientific renaissance, and this only by arguing from the analogy of other types of thought. Of greater importance for the

[1] Chap. I., pp. 8–9.

present discussion is the second — and again a negative — reason for the failure of science hitherto to participate directly in the great historical transitions in opinion — the absence of successful challenge to the methods of scientific investigation. In its inception this method was itself a product of reaction, for it was formulated in opposition to the deductive method of inquiry, just as its early defenders revolted from the content of the thinking that was cast in the deductive mould. Since that time it has been developed through three centuries and more of scientific activity, passing from less perfect to more complete and accurate forms and finding adaptation to ever widening and varying fields of research. And as it has experienced these changes in the course of its history, — from its employment by Roger Bacon, the monk, and Francis Bacon, the greater of the name, down to the scientists and logicians of the present age, — so also it has been the instrument of many revolutions in scientific theory. Yet it has not been called on to endure the test of successful attack. Although its applicability to all subjects of inquiry has been legitimately brought into question, and vigorous defence has been made of the claims of other methods to be considered in the ascertainment of different forms of truth, within its own field the

inductive[1] method of inquiry still rules supreme. It is now more securely established than in the days of its early promulgation. Then it was advocated with the ardor of new discipleship, in contrast to the waning fortunes of a dying system — now it is extolled with the assurance which comes with achieved success. Thus there has never been a period of sceptical doubt concerning the competence of science to solve its own problems, or the validity of its authoritatively sanctioned results; and so far as it is possible to judge at present, no such crisis is to be anticipated in the future. When one scientific principle or body of scientific conclusions is substituted for another, the possibility of scientific knowledge altogether is not called in question, as more than once it has been the unhappy fate of other forms of reflective thinking to be made the objects of destructive criticism. The scientific investigator is not haunted by the lurking suspicion that after all his work may be illusory, because it is given to no finite mind to reach the truths which form the goal of his inquiries. If a mistake is made, it is incidental to the general fallibility of human thinking. If a new discovery takes the place of some time-honored theory, thought does not dwell in

[1] Inductive, of course, in the broad sense of the term.

sadness on the limitations of human intelligence, but rejoices that once more an addition has been made to the long series of triumphs over the mysteries of nature. In neither case is there, or at least has there been so far, the harassing anxiety whether the investigation itself is vain. The most poignant distress engendered by transitions in thought is therefore unfamiliar to the scientific mind; and so long as such conditions continue to hold good, science may be expected, in virtue of this characteristic also, to remain an indirect source of changes in opinion rather than an immediate participant in them.

These limitations of the influence which science exerts upon other forms of intellectual activity are more than balanced, however, by the extent and the magnitude of its effects. In the history of modern reflection there have been few movements of an intellectual kind that can be compared with it in respect of its bearings on the genesis of opinion. It is commonly believed that the present time is beyond all others the era of scientific progress, the period in which thought has most fully submitted to the guidance of the scientific spirit. But although this conclusion is for the most part certainly true, it is a mistake to suppose that the present is unique among the subordinate periods

which together make up the modern age. Apart from the fact that in its earlier decades the nineteenth century was marked by the boldest, and for the time being well-nigh the most successful, development of speculative philosophy that the world has ever seen, it is noteworthy that this age is not the only one which has felt the weight of scientific control. The evidence for this conclusion has been in part presented in the preceding chapter.[1] Here therefore it will be necessary only to complete the argument, by citing a few supplementary facts in corroboration of the position that the scientific movement, which in our time has found its culmination, has to a greater or less degree been characteristic of modern thinking as a whole. At the beginning of the era the revolt from mediævalism was in considerable measure the result of a demand for the study of the natural world: when men wearied of the abstract methods of the Scholastic reasoning and its arid results, they turned with eager interest to the investigation of the world around them, just as the attractions of the new form of inquiry, once felt, drew them irresistibly away from the pursuit of the older metaphysic. The speculative philosophers of the seventeenth century often experienced the force of the same

[1] Chap. II., pp. 69–73, 76–80.

influence, even when they did not give themselves entirely to its service, — witness, for instance, the devotion of Descartes to scientific problems, or the early development of modern materialism by thinkers such as Hobbes and Gassendi. On the border line between the seventeenth century and the eighteenth, Locke, despite his underestimation of the certainty of inductive inquiry, echoed the Baconian spirit in its application to mind,[1] and escaped the sceptical consequences of his empiricism, in part by adopting as metaphysical reality the world which science had revealed. In the eighteenth century Deism derived one of the motives for its existence from the discoveries of British scientists, while acquaintance with them constituted one of the principal sources of the French Enlightenment.[2] And in more recent times, even though the scientific movement is to be counted a development from these earlier conditions rather than a new creation, it has greatly enlarged its boundaries and consolidated its power. In France it has continued to give the keynote to thought. In Germany it first served as the chief agent in the destruction of the *a priori* systems, and then filled the void created by their disap-

[1] Cf. Falckenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 155, 175.
[2] Cf. chap. II., pp. 64, 70.

pearance with investigations and speculations conducted under its own auspices. In Britain and America it has numbered famous names among its votaries, has led to results amazing at once because of the insight into nature which they reveal and because of the extent of their influence in the development of contemporary opinion, and allying itself or being brought into alliance with the traditional English metaphysic has secured for the latter a new lease of power in the world.

The reasons for this extensive influence of science are in part to be found in the nature of the methods which science employs, in part they depend upon the character and the bearings of the conclusions at which it arrives. The question of method has already been considered in sufficient detail; and apart from the conditions of the present discussion, it is important to note that the content of empirical thinking has been of momentous significance for the progress of modern reflection. This holds good not only of the constructive effects of scientific theories, but also of their negative implications. In many cases the special results of research have conflicted, or have seemed to conflict, with principles essential to the integrity of philosophical or religious belief. From the beginnings of modern thought, when the new astronomy appeared to

overthrow the very foundations of faith concerning the celestial world, down through the debates occasioned by the discoveries of physics and chemistry, geology and anthropology, to the controversies just ending, or still continued, over the bearing of the new biology on our views of the world and man,[1] to the suggestions of the new psychology in regard to mental life, to the later theories of society which attack the traditional principles alike of the political and of the moral order,[2] — the successive advances of science, by reason of their discrepancy with accepted views, have occasioned intellectual conflicts more or less permanent in their consequences, but always serious while they have lasted and provocative of anxiety beyond the limits of their legitimate influence.

In addition to its particular effects, the influence of scientific discovery on the general theory of the world has been of moment. According to the strict interpretation, it is true that the sum of accepted scientific principles is no more than a system of correlated conclusions concerning phenomena, but this, as has already been intimated,[3] is related in the closest possible way to metaphysical and even to theological views. For, in the

[1] Cf. below, pp. 126–129; also, chap. IV., pp. 157 ff., chap. VII., pp. 325–326. [2] Cf. chap. V. [3] pp. 90–92.

first place, it is evident that at the lowest terms science implies assumptions which transcend the limits of merely phenomenal truth, — thinkers of every school now recognize the necessity for postulating, at very least, the principles of logic and the existence of an order of nature, — and that the outcome of science, in the form of established empirical results, constitutes a large and important part of the data on which the work of speculation has to proceed. The history of modern thought, once more, is filled with proofs of the facility with which the scientific view of things passes over into a metaphysical doctrine.[1] Sometimes it is broadly maintained that science in and of itself forms such a system of philosophy, an empirical, mechanical, materialistic, atheistic theory of the world and human life. This position no doubt is an extreme one. Science as such is not philosophy, though many thinkers of later times have chosen to ignore the fact; still less is it any one of the various philosophical systems in particular. But unquestionably it tends to become philosophy, or a substitute therefor, and it lends itself to the support of the negative, mechanical, and materialistic type of speculation, — especially when it is raised without critical interpretation into a theory of the ultimate

[1] Cf. chap. II., p. 78.

nature of things, — rather than to the furtherance of systems of an *a priori* or a spiritual kind. Finally, it is to be noted that legitimate objection lies not so much against the actual transformation of science into philosophy as against the nature of the process by which too often this is effected and the extent to which it is carried out. For, which of all the products of modern thinking has a clearer title to be considered in the framing of answers to the fundamental questions than that type of intellectual effort which is the glory of the age? And what truths can bear more directly, or more cogently, upon the solution of ultimate problems than the well-ascertained and precisely formulated conclusions of science concerning the natural world? Science, therefore, and scientific thinkers enjoy a full right to influence the course of philosophical reflection. They deserve to be welcomed into the philosophical field. Only it must be emphasized that, since the two spheres of inquiry are radically different, the presuppositions of the investigation, the methods of procedure, and the standards of result, will also widely differ — and insisted above all that it is neither scientific nor philosophical to transfer the conclusions reached in the one department of thought without analysis and criticism to the other, in the expectation that

they will prove as valuable, as authoritative, and as decisive there as in the field to which they immediately belong. Such a procedure, although it is frequently attempted, recalls the fallacies of mediævalism, from which science is believed to have delivered the modern mind. It might be going too far to call it verbalism, but it certainly is not thought.[1]

But in spite of all the triumphs of the new manner of regarding the world and our method of prying into nature's secrets, is it not clear that the influence of science upon other forms of thought has been chiefly of a destructive kind? Does not the brief summary that has just been given itself imply the negative bearing of scientific thinking, in so far as it at all affects the development of opinion? In the attempt to find answers to these questions, a preliminary consideration must be kept in mind which applies equally to scientific and non-scientific reflection, namely, that negative movements are relatively powerless unless the tendencies which make for the rejection of accepted doctrines have in them the vigor which proceeds from new constructive ideas. Probably there has never been

[1] On the meaning of science and philosophy, and the relations of the two, see G. T. Ladd, *Introduction to Philosophy*, chap. I., III.–IV.; and J. H. W. Stuckenberg, *Introduction to the Study of Philosophy*, chap. I., III.–IV.

an era of transition in which the forces at work have been exclusively destructive. Even the Sophistic movement in Greece, for all its unworthy doubting, merited praise for its success in bringing into notice elements in the philosophical problem which the earlier metaphysicians had neglected; while in a more concrete way, through their grammatical, rhetorical, and logical inquiries, by their attention to the art of public speech and to the education of the young, the Sophists made contribution to the intellectual and practical progress of their native land. And that which is true of transitional ages in the large holds good, also, of the various factors in the intellectual movement. Mere denial may succeed for a time, but unless it is based upon positive principles, or allied with such, its influence passes, leaving little trace upon the history of culture. Conversely, when a form of thought is found to have affected the course of intellectual development through considerable periods of time, now diverting opinion from the ancient ways, now guiding it into unwonted channels, it may confidently be expected to show on examination an inherent constructive power.

In any special account of science, moreover, and in any just estimate of its value, two factors must be carefully distinguished. On the one side are

the crucial problems which have been forced upon the modern mind by the outcome of this, its most favored and most successful form of intellectual endeavor. These few will seek to ignore, least of all the present writer. But they are so manifest to the student of opinion, they have been so often exploited, and they have crept so subtly even into this discussion, that it will be a more profitable as well as a more agreeable task, leaving the negative aspect of the question, to direct attention to the tendencies in scientific thinking which have reached a happier issue, or which give promise of positive results in the future.

Clearly, then, science has created a view of the physical world which because of its certainty, accuracy, and precision, because of its fertility in the promotion of discovery, and its utility in the service of mankind, entitles it to claim that it has successfully realized the ideals proposed by its leaders in the dawning modern age. It has proved successful also in the investigation of internal nature, although the mental sciences remain, as perhaps they must continue for the future, inferior in point of completeness and of certainty to the sciences of material fact. As matters of theory, the results of empirical inquiry have so closely approximated the ideal standards of knowledge, that the

term "science" is often diverted from its etymological and historical meaning to denote this specific type of research and the conclusions to which it leads. On the side of practice, it is evident that life has been prolonged and made more valuable through the labors of scientific inquirers; that earth and air and sea have been brought more fully under man's control; that the material conditions of individual existence have been rendered less arduous, and the material progress of society furthered. The world, scientific and non-scientific alike, recognizes once more the marvellous expansion of thought which has been accomplished since the development and the general adoption of the inductive method of investigation, while many contemporary thinkers are more or less clearly aware of the fact, to which reference has just been made, that scientific conclusions are readily construed in terms of philosophical significance.

This last item in the success of science has been shown to possess its dangers as well as its elements of promise. The former deserve greater attention than in some instances they have received. But for the present purpose, it is of less importance to dwell upon them than it is to notice that science exerts a reflex influence on thought, which, in the opinion of the writer, is to be reckoned among

its principal achievements. For although according to the strict definitions of the terms it is necessary, as we have argued, to distinguish between scientific reasoning and philosophical speculation, in the broader sense science is a real philosophy. That is to say, its method is based upon thought processes, and its results lead on to principiant conclusions, even when in themselves they do not amount to definite principles. It is an old error, though one which certain so-called scientists have done their best to keep alive, that scientific work depends upon the exercise of the observational, rather than of the rational faculties. The popular mind too often thinks of the man of science as one who peers up through telescopes or down through microscopes, who manufactures queer odors in places called laboratories, or dissects unfortunate beasts in laboratories of a different sort and name, and who then takes pains exactly to record the facts he has observed — the whole process in some mysterious way at times producing practical results of a useful kind, at times tending to subvert the foundations of religious faith. But to the student of scientific method the matter assumes a different aspect. The factors in scientific inquiry which most appeal to his appreciation do not consist in patient observation and experimentation,

and the registration of the data thus obtained, however much he may be disposed to admire the successful devotion with which these necessary operations are performed; rather does he dwell with pleasure on the scientific imagination which strikes out hypotheses, fruitful because of their very simplicity and audacity as well as because of the basis of ascertained fact which forms their point of departure, and most of all he is impressed by the scope, by the brilliancy, by the precision of thought — thought in the narrower meaning of the term — exhibited by the scientists whose discoveries have made the modern age illustrious. Copernicus and Kepler and Galileo and Newton, — to select a few names from the standpoint of a layman in science, — Linnæus and Cuvier and Humboldt, Dalton and Kirchhoff and Bunsen, Helmholtz and Clerk-Maxwell, Darwin and Wallace, and the late theorists of biological evolution, Pasteur and Koch, — no mere empirics these, but intellectual leaders in whom patience in research has been well mated with the highest powers of correlating thought, synthetic thinkers in the strictest sense, philosophers, if the word be understood to include all thinkers of comprehensive grasp and combining faculty as well as those who devote themselves specifically to speculative reflec-

tion. The case is evident, again, if the results of science are considered instead of the master minds. The heliocentric astronomy, the law of gravitation, the atomic theory, the conservation and correlation of energy, the evolutionary theory of the origin of species, the discoveries of solar physics, the germ theory of disease — conclusions of this kind are principles which bring into connection great masses of facts previously isolated, if known at all, and which render further inference possible to other phenomena distant in time or remote in place.

These triumphant achievements, moreover, have created a new source of confidence in the power of the mind. Never before in the history of human thinking has there been given so impressive an illustration of the capacity of the mind for the discovery of truth. It is especially worthy of notice that in no previous era of transition — the eighteenth century, in which also science exercised a constructive effect, alone approximates the present age in this respect — [1] has mankind been in possession of so large and so important a body of accepted conclusions. Thus amid all the critical questionings of the time science has exerted a potent steadying influence. Though it has thrown serious doubt upon principles of great value in

[1] Cf. chap. II., pp. 69–73.

other departments of thought — within the limits of its own field it has furnished so striking an example of intellectual power that the age has been delivered from some of the worst miseries that have oppressed mankind in other sceptical eras.[1] Henceforth, whatever may be held to be true concerning the possibility of knowledge in the sphere of metaphysics or theology, few will have the hardihood to refuse credence to the results arrived at by the sciences of empirical fact. Rarely, if ever again, unless science itself should fail, are men likely to renew the wail of the ancient Sophist, Nothing exists, and If anything existed, it would be unknowable, and Even if it were knowable, the knowledge could not be communicated. Such cries of despair are not put up in times when men are busy in penetrating the mysteries which nature has kept inviolate since the world began.

And this element in the thought of the period is great gain. If prophesying were at all in place, the prediction might be hazarded that later ages will look back with surprise on the failure of so many thinkers of the present time to recognize these positive implications of science. Misled, the historian of the future will say, by the conflict between the newly discovered principles and certain

[1] Cf. chap. II., pp. 48–52, 76–80.

of their cherished beliefs, many of the choicest minds of the later nineteenth century and the early twentieth were blinded to the service which science rendered in saving their age from utter mental despair; in contrast to the votaries of the new learning, who too often, with equal misapprehension of the truth, supposed that all man's spiritual need could be supplied by nourishing his soul on a diet of general laws. It must be acknowledged, indeed, that the matter is viewed by many philosophical thinkers in a different light from that in which it appeals to the popular consciousness, or even to the leaders of scientific opinion. To the former the bearing of discovery on the value of knowledge suggests some of the most central and most critical problems of epistemological theory. In particular, philosophy is compelled to consider whether the ultimate validity of thought is a question in regard to which evidence of a merely experiential kind can possess any cogency whatsoever. For in the last analysis, how can the trustworthiness of mental faculty be established by a process of reasoning in which by the nature of the case this same faculty is involved? And is it not necessary in some sort to postulate the truth of cognition in order that thought may proceed at all, even that thinking by which the value of intelligence is to be tested?

But in whatsoever sense the answers to these fundamental questions may fall out, the historical consequences of the progress of science are beyond dispute. Notwithstanding the difficulty of the problem considered as a matter of speculative theory, in practice the success of empirical inquiry has served to check the development of scepticism in its universal forms, just as the absence of a body of established principles, and the contradictions in opinion which accompanied this lack, have proved a prolific source of sceptical theories in earlier ages of the world.[1]

Similar conclusions hold — the doubt with added force[2] — in regard to a second fundamental principle of modern reflection, the belief in a fixed order of the world. This postulate has been called by various names, the unity or uniformity or constancy of nature, the system or order of nature, the existence of laws of nature, etc.; and, in thesis, it is not a new conception of the modern age, but a very ancient conviction, which in later times has gained enormously in prominence and power. For, largely in consequence of the successful activity of science, the belief in the existence of a world-order

[1] Cf. chap. II., pp. 48–52.

[2] For an example of many discussions of this phase of the subject, see Lotze, *Metaphysik* (1879), "Einleitung," §§ III. ff.

has become entrenched in modern thinking to so remarkable a degree that it now commands the unquestioning assent of all instructed minds. In fact, it might seriously be urged that the principle has advanced beyond the stage of a necessary assumption and, at least in the case of many, attained the position of a dogma. A century and a half ago Hume himself abated somewhat his destructive criticism, in favor of the idea of uniformity in so far as it lies at the basis of common knowledge and phenomenal inquiry; the numerous body of later thinkers who in considerable measure have inherited his spirit in this instance extend the positive reasonings of the master, as they include the doctrine of uniformity among their rather scanty stock of fixed beliefs. The exaggeration of the position may be a legitimate subject of regret, as regret must also be felt in view of the difficulties in the sphere of morals and faith which the principle, even in its most careful formulations, is liable to evoke. But as in regard to thought at large, so also in regard to this first principle of both knowledge and existence, there is a large entry to be made on the credit side of the balance-sheet in offset to any possible losses.

More debatable ground is reached when attention is directed to the effects of scientific reflection upon

the principles of ethical and spiritual life. Few questions have been so much canvassed in recent times, as few have stood in so great need of discussion, as the questions which concern the relation of science to these last and most important interests of mankind. For in the broadest way, it has been necessary to inquire whether science is altogether in conflict with these, and if taken in its literal, or even in any fair interpretation, it tends to nullify or destroy them, or whether, on the other hand, and quite apart from the endeavors of the professional "reconcilers" to force a complete and exact adjustment between the two departments of thought, it includes in this region also tendencies of a reconstructive kind. Queries like these will press for consideration more than once in the course of this investigation, but since the matter is germane to the present argument, it may here be remarked in a preliminary way that, to some extent at least, the answers may be expected to prove affirmative. At least in so far as the researches of science, or inferences based upon them, have revealed the inherent correlation of natural and spiritual truth, or have thrown fresh light on this connection in cases where it was already known, at least to this extent there is justice in the claim that through their aid the foundations

of morals and religion have been strengthened. The critical ethical antinomies, for instance, which have been created or brought into prominence by "scientific" ethics have beyond all question been a source of painful anxiety for the contemporary moralist; but a partial, if only a partial, return for his loss is to be found in the fact that the truths for whose safety he is most concerned have been shown in general to correspond to the principles of science, and this in an age when science has been the dominant factor in thought. In regard to the influence of science on religion, the most remarkable phenomenon of recent years has not been the continuance of doubt touching religious truth, but the production of evidence by science itself, — by psychology and anthropology, by sociology, by the new-born science of religion, — in proof of the integral and essential position of religion in individual life and human society.[1]

In this way science has contributed to the recoil from doubt which distinguished the closing decades of the nineteenth century from its middle and third quarters.[2] It is noteworthy, moreover, that the movement back toward faith has been

[1] Cf. chap. VI., pp. 253–256.

[2] Cf. "The Return to Faith" by the writer, *Methodist Review*, January, 1896, pp. 66–76.

furthered not by particular forms of scientific theory alone, but by the development of scientific thought at large. This is especially true in regard to the question of theistic belief. For not only are neo-theists found among the ranks of scientific inquirers, — this was to be expected after the first effect of the new discoveries had somewhat spent its force and man's instinctive tendency toward religion had begun to reassert its power, — but science itself, as ever leading on to speculative reflection, supplies new motives, if we should not rather call them fresh reasons, for belief in God. Foremost here is the impulse which science at the close of its nineteenth-century development gives to the postulation of some sort of a unitary ground of the world. This, it must be remarked in passing, has not always been the case, since, in spite of the general unifying tendencies of science, there are certain scientific principles which at first sight lend assistance to individualistic views. The analysis of matter into independent atoms, for instance, or into discrete particles of any sort, has often secured the assent of scholars who have given little heed to the difficult speculative problems which surround the assumption of the full independence of the constituent elements of physical reality, or to the hints which their cor-

relation yields at the existence of a deeper underlying unity. And strangely enough, certain developments of mental science have favored similar conclusions: the mind can be resolved into a congeries of sensations, so not a few of the philosophers have held (or hold to-day), and many scientific theorists have welcomed the doctrine as consonant with their own results. Even the earlier social movements often lacked that emphatic suggestion of solidarity which has become so characteristic of sociological thinking in the present age. Later discoveries, however, have brought with them a corrective of any purely individualistic or atomistic view of the universe. In the doctrine of the conservation and correlation of energy, for example, physics has found a first principle which so binds all the conclusions of material science into a system that, instinctively or on reflection, the mind refuses to rest content with the resolution of the world into a collection of discrete particles, without a unifying basis. The theory of the luminiferous ether, and the speculations which cluster round it, tend to reduce all forms of material existence to manifestations of an actual physical unity. The principle of biological evolution has revealed a unity of descent in the world of organic life, the extension of the

principle of development to all terrestrial, and even to all cosmical phenomena, has wrought the idea of unity in progress into the general thought of the age. Over scientific inquiry of every kind hovers with increasing power the idea of law, until the manifold elements of the visible universe are brought into a network of relations so closely woven[1] that the neglect to postulate some deeper principle in explanation of the fact becomes a refusal to draw any conclusion whatsoever from the data in the case.

In criticism of such positions, it may be contended that the inference suggested is at best unclear and imperfectly developed. And undoubtedly the objection carries weight. The idea of a unity at the basis of the world or, in the more technical language of philosophy, the idea of a unitary world-ground, is one of those ultimate conceptions which in themselves involve peculiar difficulties, and which make their appeal to a much larger number of minds than is the list of those who could define them or defend them successfully against sceptical detraction. Nevertheless, the trend of thought is unmistakable, and its importance in the decision of questions of faith. For here the results of scientific inquiry reinforce the

[1] Cf. above, pp. 113–114.

metaphysical impulse which constitutes one of the fundamental tendencies toward theistic belief. In this the reflective efforts of the popular consciousness and the more formal endeavors of philosophers to secure an ultimate interpretation of the world unite, seeing that human thought at large instinctively tends to culminate in the idea of an Infinite Oneness. This idea, moreover, declines to remain a mere conception, but steadily presses on toward belief in the existence of the Infinite that has been conceived. In spite, therefore, of the intricacy of the problem, nearly all systems of thought which in any degree rise above the atomistic level assume some such principle as their point of departure or number it among their final conclusions. The materialist elevates Matter or Nature or Force into a position of quasi supremacy: the idealist of one type reduces all things to manifestations of an Eternal Mind, while his fellow in name, though not in doctrine, conceives the universe as a system of Intellectual Concepts or the outflowing of an Infinite Spiritual Process. Dualism commonly finds its completion in the existence of an Infinite Spirit, on whom finite minds and finite things are alike dependent. And now scientific inquiry joins hands with the primal theistic impulse. Nowhere is the strength of the alliance

better exemplified than in the philosophy of Herbert Spencer and his followers, who take to themselves especial credit for conducting their investigations in accordance with the methods of science and for basing their speculative conclusions on scientific premises. Much more impressive than the reasons adduced by the members of this school for their belief in an "Incomprehensible Power"[1] is the steady drift of their thinking toward the acceptance of the postulate, in contrast to their agnostic attitude in relation to other transcendent questions. Very different in this respect is the English agnosticism of the day from the eighteenth-century scepticism of which it is the lineal descendant. The latter was at pains to involve all principles except those of practical experience in the toils of its doubt; but the great agnostic leader of the present time knows[2] an "unknowable" Absolute that exists, that is one, that is a power, that forms the ground of the relative world.[3] The advance in the direction of more positive views of knowledge and of more constructive conclusions concern-

[1] Cf. Spencer, *First Principles* (6th ed., 1900), § 26.

[2] Or rather has "an indefinite consciousness" of it. *First Principles* (6th ed.), § 26, and "Postscript to Part I."

[3] *First Principles*, §§ 26, 27, 191, 194; *Principles of Sociology*, §§ 659, 660. Cf. J. Ward, *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, vol. II., pp. 267 ff.; R. Flint, *Agnosticism*, pp. 629–639.

ing the Infinite is marked. And it is scarcely to be questioned that the marvellous progress of science in the interval, and the character of its results, have played an important part alike in promoting the increase of confidence in the power of thought and in leading to the metaphysical inference.

The theistic implications of science, however, comprise more than this primary principle. Not only are they adapted to confirm the belief in some sort of a ground of the world, but they add a qualitative determination of its nature. For if it is allowable to base any inference whatever in regard to the Absolute on the data which science supplies, we can hardly refuse to advance from the assumption of an infinite unity in general to the conception of this Infinite as active. Power, Cause, Force, Energy, such are the designations for the Supreme Being which science suggests, and such the idea of its nature which it presses home upon seekers after truth. Even the agnosticism which is based upon science finds it impossible, as we have seen, to refrain from describing the "Inscrutable," the existence of which it assumes, in terms of the dynamism habitual to it in thinking of things at large. Thus the conception of the Absolute which fol-

lows from reflection on our present knowledge of the phenomenal world is radically different from views in favor during the earlier portions of the modern era. In those early days science itself had not completed its escape from the static notion of the universe which had been handed down to it from antiquity; now it is dynamic to the core. The world is looked upon as a scene of universal activity. Matter is held by many competent thinkers to be the phenomenon of which force or energy is the ultimate underlying reality. The fundamental implications of scientific investigation are causal and genetic rather than substantial or attributive, and scientific conclusions are laws, laws for the most part of action and change. Empirical inquiry, therefore, issues in principles of the dynamic order, even as it starts from them; and any form of metaphysics which counts the outcome of science among its important data finds itself constrained to take earnest notice of the dynamical analysis.

It is almost superfluous to add that this line of thought is in harmony with many of the later developments of philosophical speculation. Sometimes a dynamic theory of the universe has been reached through abstract metaphysical reflection, as when Fichte, starting from the Kantian posi-

tions, developed the Idealism of free moral activity, or Schopenhauer substituted his conception of the world as will and idea for the intellectualism of Hegel. Sometimes the scientific and the speculative impulse join hands, and both are brought into correlation with the claims of the heart and conscience: so Lotze, echoing in part the active interpretation of reality which Leibnitz, in anticipation of later opinion, opposed two centuries ago to the substantialism of Spinoza, endeavored to combine the scientific and the philosophical, the mechanical and the teleological views of the world into one consistent system.

There is also no need to discuss in detail the metaphysical cruces involved in the dynamic conception of the Absolute. These are quite as real as the questions which beset the assumption of an infinite unity of any kind, as real, also, though possibly not so acute, as the problems connected with the argument for the personality of the Deity,[1] — albeit many recent writers of the negative school appear to think that their halfway doctrine of the Unknowable avoids such ultimate problems altogether. But this is not the aspect of the matter which is now in question. It is with the constructive intimations of science touching

[1] Cf. J. Fiske, *Through Nature to God*, pp. 152–162.

transcendent principles that we have to do, rather than with the inherent difficulties of transcendent speculation at large. And the truth here is the same concerning the qualitative determination of the Infinite as it has been found to be in regard to the assumption of an indeterminate ground of the world. In the one case the outcome of science allied itself with a general tendency of human thinking to lend support to a fundamental postulate of theistic reflection: in this it joins hands with philosophy to give substantial assistance in the advance from the assumption of some sort of an Infinite to belief in God. The world has an infinite unitary basis, the ground of the world is an active Being — such are the successive steps in the scientific argument for faith.

But the belief in an infinite unity, or even in an active ground of the world, does not amount to theism in the proper meaning of the term.[1] If the argument stops here, the result may be a pantheistic view of the universe rather than faith in a living God. Not infrequently in the history of speculation, thinkers in whom the instinct for

[1] pp. 116–122 and 125–131 were printed in *The Independent*, New York, Sept. 23, 1897, under the title, "Theism and Contemporary Science."

the first of the two principles just discussed has been especially strong have fallen fatally short of the full theistic conclusion;[1] and it does not appear that the addition of the idea of activity is sufficient to complete the inference. On the contrary, this is a point at which it has seemed in the recent past that science was destined to accomplish a deadly work. The nineteenth century opened in Germany with a successful speculative movement which tended toward pantheism along the lines of metaphysical theory; as it reached its meridian and began to wane, the outcome of physical inquiry appeared, even more than it had done in the earlier modern period, to corroborate the same dreary doctrine. The special scientific conclusion which forms the principle of biological evolution was held to destroy the argument which of all the older theistic proofs was most relied on to justify belief in an intelligent Creator. For the theory of the origin of organic species by natural descent was at first greeted by friend and foe alike as voiding the argument from design of all probative force. Furthermore, the general results of science pointed in a similar direction. If all physical facts are to be explained in terms of matter and motion, if

[1] Spinoza, for example.

mechanism is everywhere dominant in the realm of physical law, if consciousness itself is correlated with the phenomena of brain and nerve — what boots it whether the world-ground be one or many, active or inactive, or whether there be a world-ground at all. Is not the only legitimate conclusion from the given premises pantheism of a materialistic type?

Nevertheless, science in its progress is beginning once more to make suggestions of an opposite kind. In reference to certain of the questions at issue between theism and pantheism, scientific reflection has little to offer in confirmation of the theistic position. It hinders rather than helps in the argument for the separateness and independence of the Infinite in relation to the finite world; so likewise the problems concerning the divine will remain for solution when science has yielded of her best. But in regard to the question of the divine intelligence, she is returning in measure to her work in support of the venture of faith. For although Darwinism is incompatible with the older teleology of creative fiat, it is evident that the theory of biological evolution is instinct with teleological implications of its own: it has greatly enlarged our conceptions of the number and the complexity of the adjustments manifested by the phenomena of the organic

world; it arrives at its conclusions by taking account of the ulterior relations of structure and function, instead of considering these apart from the question of adaptation; as it broadens to include the psychical as well as the physical life of man, his social existence, and his ethical conduct, it finds itself forced to abandon the assumption that physical laws alone are sufficient to serve as principles of universal explanation; by its results, if not by its method, it suggests estimates of value, at times even to the detriment of the purely scientific character of its own investigations.[1] Now, starting from such data, it is possible, in agreement with a considerable body of later thinkers, to defend the existence of an intelligent framer of the entire process of nature, by an inference that involves a change in the time-honored argument from design rather than the abandonment of the principle on which it was based. Or emphasis may be laid on the teleological bearings of some more special phase of the evolutionary theory, as the picture which it presents of a great world-process moving toward its goal in the life of man, henceforth "its crown and glory."[2] Or company may be joined with

[1] In particular, the identification of evolution and progress. Cf. chap. VII., pp. 309–310.

[2] Cf. Fiske, *The Destiny of Man*, and *The Idea of God*.

those who adopt a broader form of thought and respond to the idea, that where objective reason is so evident, there subjective reason can also not be absent; that since the world exhibits order and finality, the ground of the world is itself to be conceived as a conscious being. It is considerations of this latter kind, perhaps, that weigh most heavily with the majority of scientific thinkers who find themselves returning to a theistic position. The argument may not be constructed on the old lines, or there may not be much definite argumentation in their minds at all; for in the case of very many, it is not so much an inference as an impression of a general yet forcible nature, which is based upon the rationality which they discover in the facts of their own field and which rises to a belief in the existence of a Divine Reason behind and beneath the facts.[1]

With such intimations of theism, again, the results of general science enter into alliance. Not only organic life, but also the world of inorganic

[1] Less cogent than any one of the three lines of proof mentioned in the text is the attempt, which some have favored, to discover occasions for direct teleological guidance of the course of nature in the unexplained factors of the evolutionary process (*e.g.* the cause, or causes, of the variations, the selection and preservation of which in the struggle for existence accounts, according to the Darwinian theory, for the origin of species).

nature shows itself subject to law. But law means order and uniformity, and these as before suggest intelligence; so that while the prevalence of law raises serious problems of its own, it is impossible in contemplating it not to raise the question, Can nature itself be possible apart from an underlying Mind? Every new discovery in science, therefore, becomes not merely a revelation of the manner of God's working, but also a new illustration of the physical argument for his existence. The more extensive the regions of nature that are brought under the canons of rational investigation and the more successful man's effort to apply to natural phenomena the processes of his own thinking, the more difficult it becomes to believe that nature exists in independence of an Infinite Thought. In this way the crushing weight of the mechanical position is lightened by the assistance which science itself lends to the theistic proof, since various lines of reflection converge to the same positive conclusion. Theism, it must be added by way of warning, is not yet past its conflicts, nor even is it freed completely from the perils that have come to it as consequences of scientific progress. But as there are fundamental tendencies which always bear in favor of the theistic thesis, so new aids to faith have arisen in a quarter which for the time appeared to

be the house of her foes. And as science, in spite of the furtherance which it has given to modern doubt, has been found to be an effective agent in the promotion of confidence in the powers of the mind, so here, in regard to this final and critical question of human thinking, it brings assistance as well as creates difficulties which were unknown before.

CHAPTER IV

THE HISTORICAL SPIRIT AND THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION

In periods of intellectual unrest there is a natural tendency toward historical inquiry, since the abandonment of accepted principles involves a loss which must be made good before the mind can recover its normal poise, but the paralysis of constructive thinking which is consequent on the prevalence of doubt for the time being gives no promise of new conclusions fitted to supply the lack. Thinkers, therefore, who are reluctant to take refuge in a suspension of judgment, as they seek now here now there for a system more tenable than those which have been discarded, have their attention drawn to the opinions of earlier schools and ages. In some instances the appeal to the past is made in order to support revolutionary views for which acceptance is desired: so in his endeavors to replace absolute forms of government by forms of a more popular type, the modern political reformer has often cited precedents from antiquity in favor

of democratic rule. In other cases — and this class includes by far the larger number when the more fundamental issues are at stake — the return to older forms of doctrine is essayed because of the dearth of contemporary principles of a believable kind. This is especially true in the region of philosophical speculation. The decline of constructive effort in eras of transition regularly checks reflection on the central questions of metaphysical inquiry. In these periods, as remarked above, attention is for the most part diverted to the principles of ethical and religious life, courage being wanting for the consideration of problems not of immediate practical importance.[1] But ethics and religion themselves imply some sort of a view of the world and life. Hence those who feel the need for philosophy at large but find nothing in the thought of their time to satisfy the demand, are joined by those who will have as little metaphysics as possible and yet require some foundation for their practical interests, in a renewal of principles advocated by the leaders of bygone ages.

Often, it must be added, these revivals from the past are forced into alliances foreign to their own nature and to the ends which they were originally intended to accomplish. Intellectual necessity

[1] Cf. chap. I., pp. 17–23, 32 ff.

makes strange companions as well as physical want. But the vagaries of the restorers of older doctrines in no wise detract from the truth of the principle which is illustrated by their ventures. Rather do they furnish a salient proof, if further proof were needed, of the correctness of the general conclusion; illustrations of which, moreover, have been abundant in the history of both the ancient and the modern world. The alliance of the Stoic ethics with the speculative physics of Heracleitus, the adoption of the Atomistic philosophy by Epicurus and his followers, the reliance of neo-Platonism, that last great attempt of antiquity to establish an anti-Christian philosophy of religion, upon fragments of Platonic doctrine on the one hand, and echoes of Jewish and Oriental speculation on the other, are but the most striking instances of the return of ancient thought in the course of its long death-struggle to principles struck out by the master thinkers in the days of its youth and prime. Even more significant were the manifold revivals of ancient philosophy at the time of the Renaissance. For it is difficult to name a system of Greek or Latin speculation which at this period failed to secure the assent of some philosophical thinkers. There were new interpretations of Aristotle, in opposition to the Aristotelianism of orthodox theology; there was a Platonic school

antagonistic to Aristotelianism of every sort and name; there was neo-Platonism, there was Stoicism, there was Epicureanism, there was even a return to the old rhetorical philosophy by admirers of Cicero and Quintilian.[1] None of the classical systems were too great, few apparently too insignificant, to be counted worthy of reproduction, the tendency common to eras of transition being in this case intensified by the wide-spread reverence of the age for antiquity and by the dependence of its culture upon the influence of the classical revival.[2]

Such devotion to earlier forms of culture is manifestly favorable to the study of their history. In whatsoever department an interest is felt in the revival of the achievements of former times, a demand will spring up for fresh, more accurate, and more complete accounts of what these results actually were. The more general the appeal to the older thinking becomes, the louder will be the call for historical investigation, the wider the field which it will have to include in its survey. There exists, moreover, in eras of transition, a tendency toward historical modes of thought which to a certain degree is independent of the definite adoption of opinions taken from the past. For, as

[1] See Falckenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 26–29.
[2] Cf. chap. II., pp. 56–59.

always, the mind in these ages seeks material for the exercise of its activity, and since no adequate content is supplied it by the reflection of the time, it turns with interest to the inheritance come down to it from other and happier days. The energy for new intellectual enterprises is lacking: at least it is possible to study the work of mankind in times when thought was neither halted in its progress nor denied its due measure of success. Though the hope of profit from the labors of the present is but small, there remains as a secure possession the record of what the thinkers of other ages have accomplished. Beyond a doubt, the outcome of their exertions possessed a relative value for the times in which they lived, however clearly its permanent validity may have been disproven by the progress of inquiry. Perchance it may even suggest some hints or lessons bearing on the problems of the present age; while at the worst we may renew our sentiments of hope and duty, of faith and aspiration, by the contemplation of examples vouchsafed by civilizations which differed from our own as much by the robustness of their development as by their inner content. In fine, since it is impossible altogether to refrain from thinking, it is better to retrace the course followed by the mind in its earlier progress than to stand forever marking time

amid the barren wastes of negative reflection. So of set purpose, or moved by impulse, thought in transitional eras turns backward to discover truth; in addition to the tendency to revive principles and systems formerly in favor, there is a general and half-conscious inclination to focus attention on the records of the past.

It is suggestive in this connection to remember that the present age, itself an era of transition, has been preëminently characterized by the development of historical inquiry. Among the tendencies which color the reflection of the time there is none more marked than the influence which has proceeded from the growth of the historical spirit. Not only is it true that in this age above all others historical studies have engrossed the attention of scholars; but what is more notable still, our intellectual activity has been distinguished by the endeavor to utilize the principles of history in explanation of the origin, the growth, and the meaning of the most varied human institutions. It is altogether probable, however, that the devotion of the age to historical modes of thought has been due in considerable part to other causes than the interest in history which is common to periods of intellectual confusion. Indications are not wanting, it is true, that this influence also has been

at work of late, as it was four centuries ago in Western Europe, or many centuries beyond the earlier date in the declining periods of Greece and Rome. How general, for instance, is the belief nowadays among students of philosophy that, at least to a degree, we must retrace our steps before there can be any legitimate hope of fruitful progress in metaphysics: how frequently they are found going back to Kant, or Hegel, or to some of the leaders of the earlier speculation, in order to secure a starting-point for their own reflection, and how catholic, not to say how wilful, is the taste displayed in philosophy — and the same holds good of other departments as well — in the selection of positions for reproduction or for imitation. Sometimes — and the criticism, alas, applies even more to current movements in religion and theology than it does to pure speculation — a welcome is given to older doctrines so fanciful in their nature or so extreme that the observer is tempted to ascribe a quite unusual degree of credulity alike to negative thinkers who have disdainfully abandoned principles upon which Western civilization has for ages rested to replace them by others long since exploded, and to conservatives who are endeavoring in haste to rebuild the foundations of the intellectual and spiritual edifice.

Nevertheless, the historical tendencies of the present age cannot be completely explained as the result of despondency alone, or as the outcome of intellectual revolt. The influence which they exert on the thinking of the time is too extensive, they constitute too essential a factor in the constructive movement which persists in spite of the negative implications of later reflection, for them to be referred exclusively to causes of a general and negative kind. For here once more we are brought face to face with facts which have been too often overlooked in the consideration of eras of transition, the presence of constructive tendencies in the midst of the transitional movement and the close connection in many cases of its negative and its positive phases.[1] For the thinker of to-day the point is obscured by the unique relation at present existing between the various forces by which the thought of the age is controlled. Never before in the history of human thinking have principles of constructive value in their own fields been applied with so destructive effect in other departments of inquiry, never, as we have seen, have men been so confident that they were in possession of absolute truth within the limits of sensuous experience and so doubtful whether truth is attainable at all in the region of

[1] Cf. chap. III., pp. 104–105.

transcendent speculation.[1] Yet as the age passes on from its earlier to its later stages, it becomes less possible to ignore the presence of fruitful positive forces at work beneath and behind, or even along with, the specifically negative movements. Science leads on to philosophy as of old. The exigencies of political and social as well as of individual life continue to demand an ethic, albeit certain dominant developments of recent opinion have little of an ethical sort to offer. Religion refuses to accept the sentence of condemnation so often passed upon it, or even to stay dead in hearts where it has been crushed down. These are some of the more general influences which make for the continuance and the progress of constructive thinking. Prominent among the more special forces engaged in the same work are those which find expression in the devotion of the age to historical inquiry and the increase of the historical spirit.

The beginnings of the modern interest in history date farther back, indeed, than the present era of transition. In particular, it may be said concerning the last period of doubt before the present, that attention then was given to the records of the past, and that a century and a quarter or a century and a half ago advantage was taken of

[1] Cf. chap. II., pp. 76–80.

the teachings of history, as men then understood them, in the endeavor to solve the problems of the time. In support of this conclusion it would be easy to cite examples from the leaders of the destructive schools, from whom, in fact, the impulse toward historical inquiry in large measure proceeded. Voltaire wrote histories as well as dramas, poems, satires, and lampoons. Montesquieu based the *Spirit of Laws* on an analysis of the conditions on which laws depend as well as the new conceptions of nature and man. Among British writers, after the mid-century was passed, Hume added the *History of England* to his philosophical writings; while it is but a few years since the centenary of the appearance of Gibbon's *Memoirs* gave occasion to the entire English-speaking world to celebrate anew the merits of the *Decline and Fall*. In the later stages of the era, also, especially in Germany, there were anticipations and applications of the principle of historical development.[1] Thus, although the historical spirit is rightly considered characteristic of the present age and its absence or incompleteness a note of eighteenth-century reflection in its typical forms, it must not be supposed that our devotion to historical modes of thought, or even the methods of

[1] Cf. below, pp. 166–167.

historical inquiry which have proved themselves of value, have sprung up without preparation in the epoch which immediately preceded our own.[1]

Apart, however, from the great increase of interest in historical study, and the multiplication of special investigations, there are manifold elements in the historical thinking of the present era which combine to make it a notable phenomenon of intellectual progress. Prominent among these is the more perfect development of the methods of historical investigation. The methods of exact research, which have proven so fruitful in other departments of inquiry, have been more heartily welcomed than ever before by recent historical scholars as instruments for the solution of their peculiar problems. In no previous age of the world has the inquiry into the facts of history been pursued with so persistent determination, and never have the facts when ascertained been utilized so sacredly in the formation of historical conclusions. As the physical scientist observes

[1] J. Morley, *Voltaire*, chap. VI.; Leslie Stephen, *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, chap. I., § 58, IV., §§ 80–82, VIII., §§ 7, 83–87 (cf. J. T. Merz, *History of European Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, vol. I., pp. 46–47, and note [1] to the latter page, where the first of these references from Stephen is cited); W. Dilthey, "*Das achtzehnte Jahrhundert und die geschichtliche Welt*," *Deutsche Rundschau*, 1901, pp. 241–262, 350–380.

and experiments in his laboratory or in the fields, as he tests and measures and weighs, so the productive leaders of later historical study go back to the primary sources of information. Animated by a distrust of tradition and authority, and by the spirit of exact research, they make long journeys in order to become eye-witnesses of the scenes of historic events; they study the monuments to recover the annals of early civilizations; they ransack old libraries, and bring the facts to light which lie hidden in the time-stained records of the past; they burrow in official archives that original state-papers may be made to yield up their secrets; and they apply the criteria of critical interpretation to the data thus gathered, in order that the prima facie bearing of the evidence may be sifted by the strictest tests. In short, the historian nowadays differs from the annalist of primitive times as much by his patient investigation of the phenomena of history as by his endeavor to view his results in those larger connections which the mind of the annalist was entirely unfitted to grasp.

The above account has reference primarily to political and civil history. It is evident, however, that the same description will apply to the development of historical science in its wider ramifications.

In the history of society at large as in the history of its political organization, in the history of culture as in the history of the state, in ecclesiastical history no less than in the field of secular annals, in the study of the genesis and the progress of opinion — in a word, in all investigation of the past, whether the aim is merely to reproduce events as they have occurred or to base upon the recovered records inferences of a broader scope, the ideal of the historical scholar to-day includes complete acquaintance with the sources of information, careful scrutiny of the materials of history, scrupulous fidelity in the formation of his conclusions and in the presentation of them to the world. In this way, history in all its branches shares largely in the critical temper of the age. Or to put the case more accurately, it is itself instinct with the spirit of criticism, and it contributes as few other forms of human thinking to the development and the diffusion of this spirit. In order to the proper prosecution of its researches, it frames canons of investigation which reproduce in forms suited to the special field the rules of thoroughness and precision imposed by modern opinion upon all kinds of serious inquiry. The ideal which it endeavors to attain inculcates critical caution and veracity — the insistence on these

virtues of the historian increasing with the earnestness with which the aims of history are conceived. It also adds cogency to the demand for criticism by suggesting as the result of its own investigations new principles of critical interpretation. Historical criticism, therefore, in the modern acceptation of the term, means more than careful scrutiny with the aid of the various approved tests of positive and negative truth. It implies the examination of records or documents or asserted facts in view of the laws of historical development; which laws themselves on the one hand supply new criteria of historical reality, on the other suggest far-reaching principles of explanation.

These advances in method have in part accompanied in part conditioned important changes in opinion concerning the nature and the object of history, especially the change from the "pragmatic" or didactic and "literary" types of historical writing to the "scientific" form, which confines itself to "the reproduction of the events of the past exactly as they have occurred."[1] In recent times, again, the "scientific" movement has culminated in an intense reaction against the earlier modes of

[1] H. Morse Stephens, "History" in *Counsel upon the Reading of Books;* E. Bernheim, *Lehrbuch der Historischen Methode* (2d ed., 1894), pp. 13–32, 168–176.

historical inquiry and composition, has issued, in fact, in a view of history which, because of its insistence on the extreme application of critical principles, its exclusion of all didactic or ethical inferences, and its rejection of all tendencies toward the literary embellishment of historical narrative, has sometimes been compared to the negative or disintegrative movements which have marked the culture of the later nineteenth century in so many different fields.[1]

Greater significance for thought at large is to be attributed to a fourth salient characteristic of recent historical reflection, which the discussion of history as criticism has suggested by way of anticipation: its value as an instrument of explanation in various departments of inquiry. For if the influence of the modern historical spirit on the progress of opinion ended with its accentuation of critical principles, there would be ground for questioning its classification among the constructive forces of the age. It is not merely because history has interested us for its own sake that it has gained a foremost place in our thinking, nor because it has made essential contribution to the development of criticism, nor even — though at this

[1] Cf. H. Morse Stephens, *op. cit.*; and Langlois and Seignobos, *Introduction to the Study of History* (trans. by G. G. Berry).

point its effect has been very marked — because, like history in every age, it enforces lessons which bear on the questions of political and social organization. On the contrary, the strongest attraction that the historical mode of thought presents to the minds of contemporary thinkers is to be found in the proffer of itself as a means for the solution of the most varied and most pressing problems. This conception was for the most part foreign to the thought of the eighteenth century. Reflective minds were then too often controlled by the same delusion that had misled their Athenian predecessors of the fifth century before the Christian era. As the latter believed that government was the invention of tyrants for the better oppression of the subject, religion and morals devices of the ruler, abetted by the priest, for the further exploitation of the people, so the former proceeded on the assumption that institutions could be created at a stroke, or, at least, that they were possible products of artificial making. The state was held to be the result of a compact. In social life, as well as in individual conduct, a return must be made to the state of nature. Religion was to be purified from the corrupting additions which had been engrafted on the primitive rational faith. In general, on the basis of the new ideas, a complete reform of

human affairs was to be undertaken, in the unhesitating belief that the world stood on the threshold of a second golden age.

It is due in a considerable degree to the failure of these brilliant dreams that the thinking of our later age rejects the assumptions on which the work of its predecessor was founded. No longer do we believe that institutions are created out of hand; and at least the soberer heads among us are doubtful concerning man's capacity to better his condition by making all things new. In place of the conviction that institutions have sprung from single deeds on the part of leading individuals or on the part of society as a whole, there has been substituted the belief that, like all things else, they are the outcome of a process of growth. In this way the point of view has been essentially altered, the historical method of inquiry finding completion in the genetic method of explanation. This dominant conception of the new time has been well phrased in the title of a work by an American historian and philosopher whose views at many points bear on the present discussion.[1] Not merely "the destiny of man" but the nature and destiny of all things must now be studied "in the light of their origin." Biological science has

[1] J. Fiske, *The Destiny of Man Viewed in the Light of his Origin.*

been revolutionized by a theory of the genesis of species. The ultimate origin of law and custom is sought in the habits of the tribe. The source, if not always the sanction, of moral principles is discovered in the conditions of social health and progress. The great debate concerning religion and theology takes on new forms, for assailant and apologist alike view the subject from a more reasonable position than that which formed the vantage-ground of the old antagonists, the questions at issue being discussed no longer as disconnected phenomena to be considered in detail, but in connection with the principle of growth, ultimately in connection with the development of impulses deeply embedded in man's essential nature. Society as a whole is looked upon as an organism, subject like organisms at large to the laws of evolution. In fine, if the method of genetic explanation was undervalued or ignored in the last age, in this it has become a foremost factor in the reflection of the time.

A corollary — or a premise — of this notable factor in the modern historical spirit, and standing in organic connection with it, is a principle of still broader scope, which construes the products of development as themselves historical phenomena. Language and customs and institutions and be-

liefs — these, and all the other various results of the historical process, are from this point of view to be considered impermanent things. Themselves developed, they must in turn pass away; or, to state the conclusion in a more moderate form, being explicable in terms of organic growth, they are sensitive likewise to the action of the forces which bring about decay.[1] This principle, again, and *a fortiori*, amounts to a conception of the world which was absent from the thought of the eighteenth century until it began to incline toward the view which was to dominate the thinking of its immediate successor. Even then the idea in question was grasped by fewer minds than those masters of later eighteenth-century reflection numbered who caught foreglimpses of the general principle of genetic development. Even when the institutions of the time were interpreted as the outcome of a process of growth, it was not supposed that in their own nature they were transitory, and if not destined entirely to disappear, yet liable to change and transformation, and open to improvement in the course of future progress. On

[1] For a characterization of later civil history from this point of view, see Bernheim, *op. cit.*, pp. 22–31; and on the application of the principle to phenomena at large, the brief but trenchant summary by F. Paulsen, *Immanuel Kant* (Eng. trans. by Creighton and Lefevre), pp. 394–399.

the contrary, the characteristic attitude of the Enlightenment was one of satisfaction with the phase of culture which the age had reached. Up to this level growth had tended steadily higher toward the ideal stage. Now the goal was gained, or at least stood just before; so the completed outcome, seeing it was at once the latest and the best, brought with it no intimation of its impending decline.[1]

It may be doubted whether the overestimation of the achievements of the age in which one lives ceased with the close of the epoch which thus preceded our own. And apart from the question of value and its bearing on the expectation of change, it must be said that the law of impermanence is not so widely understood, nor so generally accepted still, as the principle of genetic explanation. The one suggests the other, it is true, — when it is not rather suggested by it, — but the second may be ignored, or at most implicitly assumed, even by thinkers who count the first a doctrine of indisputable validity, now at last established as part of the common stock of truth. Therefore, though the two are closely related by way of rational connection, as they have been connected also in the intellectual history of the era which they mark, a

[1] Cf. Dilthey, *op. cit.*, pp. 360, 362; also, chap. II., above, pp. 66 ff.

difference must be admitted in regard to the extent of the recognition they have respectively received.

It will be noted that these several features of later historical thinking fall into a serial order, proceeding from the simpler to the more complex, and that, as the degree of complexity increases, it becomes necessary to employ the term "history" and its derivatives in wider meanings. In fact, it might be said of more than one of the tendencies under consideration, that it is not so much a result as a condition, not the outcome of a purely historical movement terminating in a new type of thought, but a distinctive form of reflection, which as it enters into alliance with the historical spirit gives to the latter deeper significance and a stronger hold upon the mind of the age. These conclusions would hold good, in particular, of a final element in the view of things favored by modern scholars, the idea of unity and continuity in history, and in the development of the world. Here, in order to reach the facts, certain distinctions must be drawn. In general, the conception has as evidently been a note of nineteenth-century culture as it is also clear that it resembles many another modern principle in possessing an ancient and honorable ancestry going back in some of its phases to the early days of speculative reflection.

By no one has it been more distinctly announced and more forcibly urged than by Hegel, to whom also from the side of the philosophical, as to the English evolutionists from the side of the empirical sciences must be ascribed the merit of having done most to make it a constituent factor in the thought of the age. That there is a universal law in history; that connections exist, more profound and more significant even than the causal ties which bind event to event or the phenomena of one movement or age to their antecedent conditions in the period immediately preceding; that there is continuity alike among the phases of political and social development which form the subject of history in the restricted sense and in the development of the world at large — these are thoughts, or rather they together constitute a single thought, than which there have been few more potent in the intellectual movement of the last one hundred years and which, in spite of all difficulties in the way of its application, is not likely soon to disappear.

Nevertheless, there have been great diversities of judgment among nineteenth-century thinkers concerning the principle of unity and continuity, according as they have belonged to different schools or occupied varying positions in the stream

of opinion. These differences, moreover, have continued, sometimes in intensified forms, as the closing century has passed over into its successor. Of historians in the stricter sense, students that is of political or civil history, it is true that they show distinctly less inclination nowadays to consider historical phenomena in their universal relations than their predecessors felt when the age was young; and this despite the fact that, apart from any theory or system, labor in their chosen field and the results of their inquiries are fitted to press the idea in question on the notice of thoughtful minds. The severe conditions of modern research have served to direct attention to special problems. The failure of the most brilliant attempts to frame a completed philosophy of history has fostered and confirmed the impulse to neglect speculative inquiries, the movement of historical thinking in this respect running parallel to the movement of thought at large. The violence which historical truth has suffered at the hands of more than one of the builders of systems has added aversion to the speculative method to belief in its futility. So it has come about that historical theory, like most other intellectual phenomena of the age, has been influenced by currents and cross-currents determining the trend of its own history.

The mere registration of events with no account taken of their connections and without interpretation is annals, and not history. But the negative tendencies described war against the tendencies which make for correlation; and specifically, although the historian will usually accept the evolutionary ideas of his time, he will in very many cases repress the impulse to apply these to the phenomena of his science as a whole.

In spite of many analogies, the general movement of thought has included elements of a different kind. The value of the philosophical treatment of history has been brought into question, and its possibility denied. The philosophy of science, albeit with scanty recognition or acknowledgment of its speculative character, has gained steadily in favor as the age has gone on, the closing decades of the last century alone bringing a reaction against its control of thought. Now, the modern scientific view of the world in its latest phases is full of the idea of unity in progress realized through the action of a great world-process.[1] Thus the conception which three generations ago metaphysical speculation wrought into the consciousness of the age, the idea also which is suggested by the investigations of history proper, has

[1] Cf. chap. III., pp. 118–119.

been developed and emphasized until it is unquestionably to be reckoned among the chief intellectual forces of the time. To it the larger part of contemporary thought does formal homage, while many feel its influence who are not willingly responsive to its claims. By some it is accepted as a postulate regulative of inquiry, and even of constitutive validity in the general sense, but without prejudice to their impatience of dogmatic monism, in particular to their impatience or rejection of any merely mechanical or naturalistic theory of the world. Others hold it of indubitable authority in the determination of the abstract theory of things and of the assumptions fundamental to all forms of rational inquiry;[1] but, as in the cases which have just been noted, turn for fruitful subjects of study to concrete problems of a limited scope. A third class still, though its members look at the world from different points of view and own allegiance to divers systems of opinion,[2] combines the interest of the first in ultimate problems with the devotion of the second to the principle under con-

[1] On the ground that any "break" in the continuity of the world would be fatal to the rational connection of things which makes thought possible.

[2] *E.g.* metaphysical idealism, naturalism, materialism, even, though the position implies a flagrant disregard of logical consistency, phenomenalism.

sideration, and presses the doctrine of unity and continuity not only to the exclusion of all possibility of divine intervention in the course of the world and of all undetermined initiative on the part of the human will, but even to the obliteration of the distinctions between the several spheres — physical, organic, mental, moral — of actual existence.

By these several notes of thought, therefore, the historical spirit of the present age has been distinguished from the devotion to history characteristic of other eras of transition. Their genesis, it may further be remarked, has been due to a complex variety of causes. Speaking broadly and without inquiry into specific causes, the newer methods of investigation, the demand for criticism, and the "scientific" view of history, may be classed as phenomena of the development of historical knowledge under the general conditions of nineteenth-century reflection. The discussion of the method of genetic explanation, of the law of change, and the principle of continuity will lead us farther afield. Of primary importance here is the claim that the doctrine of biological evolution is to be considered the chief or even the sole source of the principles in question. This has been urged with much insistence since the successful promulgation

of the theory in the third quarter of the century that has just ended, and its acceptance not only by professional students of nature as a class, but also by instructed thinkers in other departments of inquiry. Moreover, as the statement which was made on an earlier page implies,[1] the estimates of the admirers of evolution possess a certain evident value. It has been noted by many competent writers that the prominence of biological science in the intellectual movement of the age has favored the adoption of the historical point of view, since it turns attention away from the problems of static analysis to questions of origin and growth. And if this conclusion is true of biology in general, it applies with added force to the doctrine of evolution established, for the most part, through the labors of Mr. Darwin. For it is clear that Darwin's researches mark an epoch in intellectual progress. Revolutionary in their significance because subversive of accepted views concerning the origin of species, his conclusions were based on so broad an induction from facts, as in themselves they were so carefully wrought out and with so close observance of the rules of scientific investigation, that they established for modern thought a principle which had hovered before the mind of

[1] p. 153.

thinkers since very early times,[1] but which had waited until the middle of the nineteenth century for its definite confirmation.[2]

Again, as soon became evident, the Darwinian principles bear on a wide variety of subjects which are not directly included in the biological field. For if physical characteristics are developed and species originated through the working of the evolutionary process, what is to hinder the extension of the same explanation, *mutatis mutandis*, to the phenomena of mental development? And if mind is evolved, why not morals? If morals, is there any reason to assume that social organisms are exempt from the application of the same or similar laws? Nay, so great has been the influence of the theory in recent times, and so contagious the enthusiasm of its advocates, that the world has witnessed the extraordinary spectacle of the whole round of psychical products and spiritual institutions being considered from the evolutionary standpoint to the exclusion of other points of view, or even explained on the basis of physiological or biological development in particular.

The exaggeration inherent in such extreme pre-

[1] Cf. H. F. Osborn, *From the Greeks to Darwin.*

[2] The reference, of course, is to the general doctrine of evolution, not to special principles still under debate by biologists themselves.

tensions will demand attention anon. Meanwhile, it is important to notice that the extended application of the principle of biological evolution brings it into touch with a kindred theory of universal significance. The enlargement of Darwinism to cover a wide variety of phenomena allies it with a doctrine of very ancient origin which looks on the world as a whole and in all its parts as a product of development. In the present age, a modern form of this doctrine in terms of general science had been originated by Herbert Spencer quite before the publication of the *Origin of Species*.[1] In the latter work the biological theorist took for his central problem the question of the mutability of organic species and the conditions of their origin. The philosopher of science, on the other hand, proposed to cover a broader field, seeking to trace out not simply the course of biological development, but the evolution of the entire phenomenal universe from star-dust up to mind and social life. The aim of the one is a theory of species, of the other a doctrine of cosmical progress. The former proceeds by the empirical method of inquiry, the latter mingles induction and deduction, allowing to the *a priori* forms of inference an important influ-

[1] See the Preface to the fourth edition of the *First Principles*, 1880.

ence in the determination of his conclusions. The theory of Darwin accounts for the genesis of natural kinds through adaptation to environment in virtue of natural selection under the conditions of the struggle for existence: Spencer's "synthetic system" explains the world and life on the basis of "the continuous redistribution of matter and motion."[1] Darwinism acquires a bearing on fundamental problems because of its relations, for in itself it is no more than the first principle of a special department of science. The Spencerian philosophy, although Mr. Spencer understands by philosophy merely the results of the particular sciences in a unified form and the knowledge constituted by their fusion into a system,[2] is so inclusive in its scope that the synthesis undertaken involves from time to time the transcending of the limits of phenomenal inquiry.

Nevertheless, the two theories are congruous alike in their inner meaning and in their ultimate significance. As biological evolution broadens to

[1] *First Principles*, § 92. The familiar "law of evolution" runs in its completed form: "Evolution is an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion; during which the matter passes from a relatively indefinite, incoherent homogeneity, to a relatively definite, coherent heterogeneity; and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation." *First Principles* (6th ed., 1900), § 145.

[2] *First Principles*, part II., chap. I.

bring within the scope of its central principle classes of phenomena and departments of investigation to which in the first instance it does not directly apply, it suggests the idea of evolution at large, or, more accurately, issues in this. Cosmical evolution, proceeding from abstract postulates to their concrete illustration rather than from particular phenomena to the laws which serve to explain them, finds not merely one of the sciences organized under the idea of development, but the principle of development itself, and belief in its validity, entrenched in the scientific view of the world and rapidly spreading thence to dominate the spirit of the time. In spite, therefore, of differences in extent, purpose, method, and result, the connection of these two forms of the evolution theory in recent thinking, and even their confusion by the popular mind, are based upon an actual unity.

A similar variation in scope but essential oneness of tendency will be found to characterize these movements, if they are considered in their relations to other departments of thought. The immediate influence of the Darwinian theory was disturbing to a notable degree. Before its value as a principle of scientific explanation had gained full appreciation, biologists themselves were not infrequently impressed by its destructive bearing on accepted

views of organic nature, rather than by its inner reasonableness and its promise for the future of their science. In a more marked and, it may be added, a more painful way, it was believed on every hand that its most direct and most important corollary, should it be established, would consist in the negation of philosophical and theological principles indispensable to the integrity or even to the survival of the spiritual life. By destroying the older theory of the genesis of species, Darwinism, according to the general opinion of the time, not only did away with the chief argument in support of the theistic view of the world,[1] but went far to render belief in God altogether impossible. If theism was menaced in its philosophical and reasoned forms, much more was evolution fitted to subvert the central articles of the Christian faith; while so soon as the wider implications of the theory came into view, in particular, when the evolution of man was added to the evolution of animal kinds, the crisis reached a still more serious stage as the spectre of a new materialism made its appearance above the horizon of reflective thought. Evolution, as it now seemed, does not finish its destructive work with the negation of religion, natural and revealed, but reduces man to the level

[1] Cf. chap. III., pp. 125–129.

of the brute creation. For the authority of conscience disappears at the proof of its gradual development; nay, consciousness itself must be interpreted as a function of material reality, if the principle of development is true and if it permits no break between the phenomena of the evolving brain and the facts of the mental life.

It is scarcely necessary to point out to-day how many of these problems are suggested equally by the Spencerian and the Darwinian formulation of the evolution principle, or, to return to the historical point of view, how many of them during the last generation were as a matter of fact burned into the consciousness of the time as a joint result of the labors of the two great English thinkers. Nor is the conclusion to be modified because of our later experience of the constructive and reconstructive tendencies of the theory of development, in offset to the difficulties it has created and the grave anxieties which it has added to the already heavy burden of the age. Where the influence of the *Origin of Species* and the *Descent of Man* comes to an end, and where the effect of the "Synthetic Philosophy" begins, it would be quite impossible to say, since in fact the two lines of influence have not remained separate but have joined in one. The emphasis is different in the two cases, and the

ground covered not the same; but in their logical momentum the theories are complementary, the one reaching as a corollary the goal which the other from the beginning had in view.[1]

The historico-genetic movement in later thinking, therefore, has not been dependent on biological evolution alone. Even if all the various impulses which have contributed to the origin of the movement be left out of view except the evolutionary idea, it must still be concluded that evolution in the organic sense has been but one of several forms of the theory of development influential in the genesis of nineteenth-century opinion. Very many minds, it is true, especially in Britain and America, have advanced to the acceptance of genetic principles along the lines of thinking which Darwin opened up. Nay more, in the case of the English-speaking peoples there has been no single force so potent in compelling appreciation of the doctrine in all its bearings as the outcome of his researches; while in the civilized world at large none can be compared with it, provided attention be confined to movements originating in the field of science, and none perhaps of any kind, if the inquiry be limited to

[1] It will be noted that throughout the discussion in the text abstraction is made from Mr. Spencer's agnosticism in order to centre attention on his philosophy as evolution.

the intellectual history of the last two generations. But it is equally beyond dispute that the complete identification of biological evolution with cosmical evolution, and the tendency, which is frequently manifested, to count the former the sole cause of the transition to the historical way of looking at the world and of confronting its fundamental problems, are alike exaggerations in which elements that have played important parts in the development of opinion have been substituted for that development as a whole.

The accuracy of these conclusions will be confirmed, if we extend our survey to include the progress of thought in Continental Europe instead of confining the discussion to the Anglo-Saxon world. For long before Darwin and Spencer had begun their epoch-making work, the historical spirit, and with it the beginnings of the doctrine of development, had gained so firm a hold upon the Teutonic mind that their position was assured among the controlling intellectual forces of the coming age.[1] In the second half of the eighteenth century the history of ancient art, the history of revelation,

[1] Flint gives a succinct account of the notable manifestation of the historical spirit in France in the nineteenth century (*Historical Philosophy in France*, 1894, chap. V.); and a detailed discussion of recent French historical philosophy, especially Comte's philosophy of history (chap. VI.–XI.).

and the history of humanity had in succession been wrought out by leading thinkers who conceived them from the genetic point of view.[1] Toward that century's close and in the opening decades of the nineteenth, the impulses favoring historical investigation which sprang up in the minds of the members of the Romantic school proved fruitful sources of historical inquiry in many different fields.[2] In its further progress, the new tendency which thus had found an entrance into the spirit of the time developed, on the one hand, in alliance with the philosophy of the epoch, and on the other, blossomed forth in those famous historians in the stricter meaning of the term who by their own labors consolidated the great German tradition, as their followers have continued it down to the present day.

In contrast to the course of thought in Britain, it is noteworthy that German historical thinking in the period under discussion was often colored by philosophical conceptions, or definitely associated

[1] J. J. Winckelmann, *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums*, 1764; G. E. Lessing, *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts*, 1780; J. G. von Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, 1784–1791.

[2] F. X. von Wegele, *Geschichte der Deutschen Historiographie*, pp. 977–987; J. Royce, *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy*, pp. 278–287.

with systematic philosophical views. This phase of the movement culminated in the work of Hegel. The organizing principle of the Hegelian metaphysic, it is true, does not in the last analysis coincide with the historical position. The goal of the system, like its commencement, is reason, and the conception of development by which it is pervaded dialectical or logical rather than of the chronological type.[1] Nevertheless, the idea of process, of development, thus conceived, is one of the underlying notions on which the system as a whole is based,[2] — a fact which of itself goes far to explain the stimulus Hegel's thinking gave to the historical sciences, — and, secondly, in its finite manifestations the Idea is represented as realizing itself at various stages under the form of development in time. So in particular, in the realm of spirit, reason progressively objectifies itself in the political and social institutions, which proceed from, as they express, the influence of the spiritual forces, and culminates in the æsthetic, the religious, and the philosophical form of thought — these themselves being considered largely from the historical point of view. Even here, indeed, the Hegelian con-

[1] Cf. W. Wallace, *Prolegomena to the Logic of Hegel* (2d ed., 1894), chap. XVII.; J. G. Hibben, *Hegel's Logic*, pp. 209–213.

[2] Cf. Kuno Fischer, *Geschichte der neuern Philosophie* (Jubiläumsausgabe), Bd. VIII., Th. I., pp. 219–231.

struction of development and its fundamental formula are *a priori* rather than scientific, idealistic, or rationalistic, and not framed in terms of ultimate material ideas. But these features, though they render it less familiar to thinkers of the English race, detract in no whit from the significance of the system; while, on the other hand, in the application of the principle of development to mental and spiritual life, its idealistic cast gives it a distinct advantage over all theories which approach these manifestations of the universal spirit from the direction of the lower and specifically physical elements of reality.

The fruits of this superiority were shown in the connection of Hegelianism with the deeper interpretations of history, as described in an earlier portion of the present chapter.[1] A second prominent illustration of the power of the Hegelian ideas was furnished by their influence on religious opinion. It would be a work of supererogation to enlarge upon the fact that Hegel's system profoundly affected theological as well as metaphysical thinking. But it is eminently worthy of notice that the principles which gave his doctrine its revolutionary force, and the results which these produced in

[1] pp. 152–153; cf. Falckenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 500–501; Bernheim, *op. cit.*, pp. 529–531.

theology, were in many respects the same as those which are agitating the religious world to-day, nearly three quarters of a century after the death of the master and the subsequent disruption of his school. In the rush of modern progress the eclipse of Idealism toward the middle of the nineteenth century has often been taken for its final disappearance, little heed being given to the distinction between the truth and the error which it contains, and, strangest phenomenon of all, especially in view of the recent revival of idealistic tendencies, with little recognition of the kinship between certain features of reflection to-day and the idealistic conclusions, and none whatever of the line of inheritance by which the elements of the former have been handed down to us. Thus such questions as immanence and transcendence, theism and pantheism, the natural and the supernatural, continuity and free activity, human or divine, personality and universal law, are often discussed in the light of recent formulations of the evolution theory, as though the principle of development had never before engaged the attention of thoughtful men and there were no lessons to be derived from the earlier consideration of the serious problems involved. Or, to take as a concrete example one of the burning questions of the time, the debate

over Biblical criticism in many cases seems to be conducted on the assumption that the problem has now for the first time crossed the threshold of the mind. With singular short-sightedness we look on the difficulties which the critical movement creates as new and portentous products of our own age, forgetful alike of the rise of criticism during the second half of the eighteenth century and the reinforcement which it received from the anti-supernaturalistic tendencies inherent in the idealistic thinking. So we examine the Pentateuch and the Prophetical books, as two generations ago the New Testament writings were subjected to destructive discussion; or we argue *pro* and *con* about the views of Kuenen and Wellhausen and Cheyne and Driver and their fellow-critics, half unconscious the while of Strauss and Baur and the Tübinger, as well as of the speculative genius who supplied the abstract background for many of their critical theories.

The importance of the historico-evolutionary movement, as well as its prominence, is indicated by the course of its own history. The discussion so far has brought into view its position as a dominant factor in the reflection of the present age. To this must now be added the further fact that the movement gives promise of continued vitality,

that, in so far as can be judged prior to the event, it is likely to remain a permanent element in culture. In biology its validity has been established by proofs so highly probable that they have gained the acceptance of all investigators in the special field, and of scholars in ever widening circles beyond the limits of the class to which they first appealed.[1] In general science and in philosophy it enjoys the advantage now of support from empirical inquiries concerning various classes of phenomena, now of consonance with the results of modern speculative analysis. As history in the restricted sense, as science, special or general, as philosophy again, and in the application of the forms of investigation proper to these several branches of knowledge to subordinate departments of thought, it is further accredited by its fruitfulness as a method of research and as a principle of explanation.

Thus the ulterior significance of the movement is to be measured not merely by the evidence in its favor, nor even by the sweep of its conclusions, but also by its power as a constructive force. Constructive, it is true, it is not in the sense of tending to rebuild the intellectual or spiritual edifice in strict accordance with the old designs; for

[1] Cf. above, pp. 157–159.

in general, exact reconstruction in the matters of the spirit is rarely more than an alluring vision, while it is implied in the very statement of the theory in question, and of its relations to earlier modes of thought, that neither its recasting of old problems, nor the new solutions which it offers, can carry us back to the position occupied before the present searching, doubting age began. In a broader sense, however, it is marked by the characteristic features of a great constructive movement. It does not destroy old conclusions by simple disintegration, but also by substituting others in their room. The new conceptions and theories first lift the sciences to which they most immediately apply to higher levels of success, sometimes re-creating them by the suggestion of principles instinct with organizing power. Then they extend their influence to other departments, until regions of knowledge the most distant and the most diverse experience the effect of the new ideas. Finally, new ways of looking at the world and life are developed, new modes of conceiving ultimate speculative and religious problems, new methods of dealing with the questions of practical life.[1] The historical type of reflection, therefore,

[1] To a degree, also, the movement is showing constructive or reconstructive power in a second and more particular sense of the

and the doctrine of development, — the one now issuing from the other, now conditioning it, now identified with it in part or whole, — cannot be looked on merely as the distinctive features of a passing phase of thought. Even before the age is ended in which they have played so large a part, it is reasonable to conclude that they are destined to make permanent contribution to intellectual progress.

These conclusions, however, hold good of the movement at large rather than of its special interpretations. They do not imply the accuracy of this or that particular view of history or theory of evolution; they are not dependent on the acceptance of some definite philosophy of development or of the various speculative corollaries which may have been deduced from it. Least of all do they lend their sanction to the exaggerations of the doctrine which have so much engaged the attention of thoughtful minds in recent times. After a considerable period of controversy and confusion, it has become plain that in the historico-genetic method and the principle of evolution the age has made additions of notable value to the intellectual possessions of the

term; as, within limits which have been pointed out, it tends to restore the principles of intellectual and practical belief which at first it brought into question or appeared to invalidate. Cf. chap. III., pp. 118–119, 127–129; also, chap. VII., pp. 325–326.

race. Moreover, the claim of the ardent advocates of the newer thinking that a readjustment of traditional principles is necessary in view of their discoveries, is also to be recognized as well-founded. Or rather, it is evident that this revision has for some time past been actually going on in various departments of thought; for no movement of such scope and influence can fail greatly to alter the course of human thinking so soon as its truth becomes apparent. But it is just here that the danger lies. The essential novelty of the doctrine, in spite of the manifold anticipations of it since reflective thought began, and its great success, have so impressed the thinkers of the time that not a few seem to act as though it enjoyed an exclusive title to be considered full and final truth. But if this be so, our age will indeed be memorable as an epoch in mental development, as hitherto no one principle or group of principles has ever proved of so preëminent importance that it has deserved to be made the ultimate criterion of truth, to the entire transformation or rejection of the achievements of preceding ages. Happily the error is one which brings its own correction. The buoyant optimism which extends the influence of a new theory beyond the limits of its legitimate application appears to be a necessary part of the enthusiastic spirit

which enables the pathfinders of thought to carry forward the work of intelligence to its utmost bounds. The audacity of their ventures in the discovery of new principles, or in the development of them, itself opens up reaches of truth that otherwise might have remained quite unexplored. For if the leaders were sensible from the start of all the difficulties which beset their quest, courage and concentration would be lacking for the enterprise on which they are bent, and so the mind be disappointed in even its reasonable expectations of gain. At the same time, the consequences of their overconfident activity supply the opportunity for the restriction of the given doctrine to its proper sphere. Thus it is with the case which is under consideration. As plainly as the student of the history of opinion discerns the significance of the principles in question, so clearly does he further perceive that their early triumphs are to be followed, more accurately, that they are being followed, by that inevitable process of criticism which gradually separates the elements of permanent worth in new systems from the elements of error and incompleteness which also they are certain to contain until thought shall have reached its final goal. Aided by such a sifting process, the reflection of later times may be expected to reap the

benefits of these discoveries of the present, while it will escape many of the dangers which for us have entered in their train.

An essential and salutary phase of this criticism applies the distinction between science and philosophy to the case in hand.[1] The necessity for insisting on the distinction in the premises has often been emphasized by recent philosophical writers. In general, it has been pointed out by them anew that there is an important difference between scientific formulæ and metaphysical principles, between empirical laws and the speculative interpretations to which they may give rise. More specifically, they have shown the doubtful character of the inference from phenomenal to ontological development, except after careful investigation of the critical problems involved; have directed attention to the difficulties that from the beginnings of speculative inquiry have surrounded conceptions such as change and becoming, evolution and development, but which in recent usage have for the most part been passed over with confident haste; have called in question the equation of succession in time with development from or into; have laid bare the ill-success of the endeavor to minimize the significance of the breaks which intervene

[1] Cf. chap. III., pp. 101–104.

between the several spheres of actual existence or to bridge the gaps; and have noted the variation to which the principle of evolution is of necessity subject in passing from one to the other of the varieties of phenomenal reality.

In order, however, that opinion may find its level, continued heed must be given to such suggestions. For the controversy over the historico-evolutionistic mode of thought, and the results in which the movement itself has issued, have furnished a singularly impressive illustration of the abnormal character of recent thinking. Though perplexed by the negative bearings of the conclusions most in harmony with the spirit of the time, nay, in part because of this perplexity, we have been tempted to hail as instruments of universal value those elements in the newer reflection which have given evidence of constructive power. Suspicious of speculative ventures, in many cases even contemptuous in our rejection of all attempts to solve the problems of metaphysics, we have pressed the results of empirical inquiry, too often without adequate preliminary consideration, home to their ultimate consequences in relation to the principles of thought and action. Never is there greater need for thorough acquaintance with the history of opinion and appreciation of the lessons which it in-

culcates, never is patient reflection on the fundamental problems more in place, than when in periods of intellectual disturbance advantage is to be taken of new discoveries or recently formulated theories to frame fresh answers to the questions of all time. But seldom has the task been undertaken with greater neglect of these obvious precautions than by the majority of those who have debated the principle of evolution in the generation just ended, and, it must in truth be added, by many who are still engaged in tracing out its implications in different departments of inquiry.

This neglect, like the heat which the discussion too often has engendered, has not been confined to either of the parties to the debate. Combined, the ardor and the haste have operated to confuse the issue and postpone the due adjustment of opinion, the balance of truth and error being obscured because neither side could view the case without prejudice, as neither, on the other hand, was cognizant of all the data necessary for an accurate judgment. A characteristic phase of the movement may be cited in illustration of the truth at large. The study of things in their origins and the method of genetic explanation have already been specified as forming a significant element in the intellectual advance of the present age. But

it is evident that the later type of reflection lends itself to exaggeration as well as the one which it supplanted; and that in order to ascertain the limits of its validity, attention must be directed not simply to its phenomenal applications, but also to the fundamental conceptions on which it ultimately depends.[1] For what in the last analysis do genesis and evolution mean? and what growth and development? And in view of the best attainable solutions for problems such as these, does origin from antecedent conditions imply identity between the result and the sources whence it has proceeded? Or, as of late has been vigorously urged in renewal of ancient and classic doctrine, is not the question of origin quite different from the questions of nature, of significance, of worth, which can be determined only after consideration of the completed product? Or, to turn to specific examples, is man less man because he is descended from an ape? Does right become wrong, and is wrong right, if conscience is the outcome of development? Does political obligation disappear with the belief that the state is an artifact? Is God banished from his world, when men conceive it as the manifestation of a divine in-

[1] For an extreme statement of this position, cf. B. P. Bowne, *Methodist Review*, 1893, pp. 681 ff., and 849 ff.

dwelling power rather than as the outcome of a single creative act?

Obviously the answers to such questions will vary with the case in hand; although this again is a principle which has been all too dimly discerned in the earlier consideration of the subject. Psychical origin is not the same as physical genesis. Moral, social, religious development, each has its own momenta, even if it be possible to bring them all under some one comprehensive law; and these, their several peculiarities, must be taken into account, whether the point at issue be the nature of the evolved result as dependent in part or whole upon antecedent conditions, or the position to be assigned it in the scale of values. In so far, however, as it is possible to reach a decision of a general kind, it may be concluded that neither of the opposing parties is in exclusive possession of the truth. If the one busies itself too much with the study of origins, — the origin of man, the genesis of conscience, the beginnings of the state, of society, of religion, — the other sometimes seems to imagine that the opinions of its antagonists can be dismissed with a simple statement of contrary views. It is idle to announce some sweeping conclusion which assumes that facts of origin and growth have no bearing whatever on

questions of nature and of worth; for it is easy to prove that in cases not a few the way in which a thing has come about of right exercises an important influence alike upon our understanding of the thing itself and upon our estimates of its significance. Man remains human, whatever his ancestry may have been. But the anthropology of the present day is written in a different sense from that in which the science was conceived before Darwin had done his work. The earlier pessimistic views of the relation of evolution to ethics have happily given place to more sober and more hopeful conclusions concerning the permanent validity of morals. But it is beyond question that certain long-accepted theories of man's practical nature, and certain views of the authority of conscience, have been driven back before the advance of evolutionary doctrine. Religion endures, and the theistic conception of the world. Yet who can ignore the stress of thought which has proceeded from the effect of historical investigation on theological opinion, and from the necessity for bringing faith into harmony with the outcome of secular reflection.

It is impossible, on the other hand, not to agree in principle with those who reject the assumption that the ultimate criteria of fact and meaning are

to be found in genetic history alone. For the state of the case in regard to this particular question is the same as that which we have found it to be in regard to the historico-evolutionary movement in general: in spite of the vaunted critical caution of the age, recent thinking has often been guilty, if not precisely of the fallacy of hasty generalization, yet of another which is equally fatal to accurate reasoning although it is not commonly set down in the logics, the fallacy of hasty and exclusive application in the employment of a new theory of inherent and comprehensive value. And the remedy is also the same as before: not despising the efforts of the enthusiastic leaders of thought, above all without abandoning the well-grounded results of their labors, we still must carefully examine their methods of procedure and the conclusions reached, in order to correlate the newer thought with other valid principles, whether they be of earlier or of later date. Careful reflection alone can draw just inferences from a mass of fresh facts and revolutionary theories presented to the mind of an age already beset with problems which tax to the utmost its powers of solution. Change there must be in such circumstances, in consequence of the intellectual advance. But the greater the change, the greater even the revelation

of truth which is made, the greater the danger that its ulterior implications will at first be misconceived; the broader the scope of the new doctrine, the more important its bearings on general views of the world and of human life, the more imperative it becomes that the conditions of normal intellectual progress should govern its own development.

CHAPTER V

THE RELATION OF THOUGHT TO SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

AMONG the salient characteristics of transitional eras which have been brought to light by the general discussion of these ages of change, the relation of thought to political and civil history is of primary importance.[1] In no one of the great eras of transition has the ferment in abstract thinking been unattended by parallel disturbances in the state and in society: in more than one, the political and social movement has constituted a principal element in the transitional movement as a whole. Speaking broadly, this fact may be classed with the other typical phenomena which, toward the close of a period of decadence and the beginning of a new age, result from the general unsettled condition of affairs. In such epochs thought and life alike experience the effects of the mood of unrest which has seized upon the spirit of the time and the longing for new forms or formulas in place of the old, which now are

[1] Cf. chap. I., pp. 23–26.

deemed effete. Political theories are no more secure against the attacks of destructive criticism than systems of metaphysics. The ideas which lie at the basis of secular society may be brought into question as well as the foundations of religious belief. Scepticism is as destructive of the principles of political and social morality as it is of the ethics of individual life. The same conclusion holds moreover in regard to political and social practice. Now intellectual or religious freedom, now civil liberty, becomes the goal of the leaders as they break with the traditions of the past; the religious tumults of one age are paralleled by the social disorders of its fellow a few centuries later in the history of the world; the license accorded to individual passion in times of moral doubt has its counterpart in the outbreaks of disorder among classes in the community whose impulses or whose needs lead them to rise when they conceive that the restraints of the traditional authority are no longer of binding force.[1]

[1] In illustration of the conclusions of the text a few examples may be cited as representative of a numerous class: the treasonable practices of the Spartan sympathizers in Athens during the Peloponnesian war; the Peasants' war in the early Reformation; the disorders of the French Revolution and the succeeding period, which are considered in more detail below. Cf. H. Contzen, *Geschichte der socialen Frage*, pp. 91 ff.

In themselves, therefore, the political and social changes which take place in eras of transition are integral factors in the movement of the age. As such, they should not hastily be reckoned secondary or derivative phenomena, since often they amount to original and independent tendencies, with an influential part to play in the progress of culture. There is a further aspect of the matter, however, in reference to which the relation of these more concrete movements to the development of opinion gains added meaning: over and above the instances in which they owe their genesis to causes acting within their own sphere, there are other cases, and these very numerous, in which in whole or part they are motived by suggestions coming to the mind of the time from its labors in other fields. And always, whether the political and social ferment is self-engendered or to a degree a derived result, because of its close connection with practical interests, its bearing on the general views of the world and life which the age adopts, and, conversely, because of the effect on it of favored principles in philosophy, in religion, of ethical theory and practice, it takes its place along with the moving forces of the time. For here is given a prerogative instance of the interaction of thought and life. Alterations in the principles on which

the social edifice directly rests, or in ideas which condition its existence as effectively as these, if more remotely, lead on to changes, even to disorders in society. The progress of social change, and the outbreaks which so often accompany the endeavor to do away with evils believed to be preying on the life of the social organism, contribute to the development of opinion. So intimate, indeed, is the relation of thought to life, that for the most part the several phases of action and reaction cannot be separately exhibited. Theory and practice enter as interwoven strands into the spiritual history of the age. Reflective analysis enables the investigator, now with considerable confidence, now, it must be confessed, with a degree of success which is little better than failure, to consider apart the various tendencies which contribute to the joint result. But in reality these are never completely sundered; it is only as their prominence in the one composite movement varies that it is possible to determine their relative significance.

In different degrees the phenomena of social disturbance have characterized all the several eras of transition. For the modern mind, however, the most conspicuous illustration of the connection of intellectual and social development is furnished by the history of the Western world during the eigh-

teenth and nineteenth centuries. This period — or rather, these two periods, which for the present purpose may be considered one — has been marked alike by the intensity of its reflective doubt, by the magnitude of the political and social revolutions which in it have altered the aspect of the civilized world, and by the constant influence which each of these contrasted forces of change has exercised on the development of its fellow.[1] Even the demand for intellectual liberty and the endeavor after emancipation from traditional forms of dogma have struck at the basis of the existing political and social organization. In the majority of instances, at least when the age was young, church and state were welded together in the order by law established. Therefore the disturbance in matters of belief of necessity precipitated difficulties in the government of the political body, produced disorders, in fact, analogous to those which in like circumstances have troubled the course of thought and history in other critical eras of the world.[2]

But the relation of religious belief to social progress in the era under consideration has been

[1] Cf. chap. II., pp. 62–86.

[2] *E.g.* the struggle between Christianity and paganism for supremacy in the Roman Empire; the disturbances which accompanied the establishment of Protestantism in Catholic states.

not only legal, but vital. Whether imposed by law, or believed in freedom, the accepted creed has been much more than a matter of enactment. Together with the system of reasoned principles in which it was traditionally grounded, it has formed an essential part of the framework of the social organism. In France, for instance, under the old régime, the faith of Rome occupied so central a position in the national life that it has maintained itself as the typical form of religion ever since, in spite of the power of French scepticism in the past, and the prevalence of free-thinking down to the present day. For before the great upheaval of the Revolution, it was the religion of the people as well as of the state, the faith by which the believer lived and died, and with the observance of whose forms the scoffer's life was outwardly conducted, however much his inner conviction might belie the usage. It was the belief accepted in the peasant's hut and in the royal palace, the cult which drew to every village church as to every famous minister a congregation of sincere and faithful worshippers, the great spiritual system which spoke through literature and found itself enshrined in splendid art. In short, Christianity in its Roman form had so entered into the national consciousness, had gained so great a hold on the spirit of the people,

that in part it had become the foundation of French society, contributing to this the principles of its ethical and spiritual life. Hence, when the faith was challenged and then brought into disrepute, the body social also felt the strain. Since the religious and the social order to a great extent were one, the weakening of either inevitably created danger for the continuance of the other. Negative opinion prepared the way for civil disorder. Rebellion in the state reacted in favor of the tendency toward unbelief. As the secular revolt proceeded, the loosening of religious ties removed a restraining influence which much was needed to hold the forces of lawlessness in check; and after the abrogation of the old ecclesiastical system, the cult of reason and the praise of civic virtue proved but flimsy barriers against the claims of passion or of greed.

Apart from the struggle for spiritual emancipation, the social outcome of the epoch may be ascribed to the influence of two closely connected movements, the contest for civil liberty, and the endeavor to ameliorate the condition of the lower classes in society. The first of these has enlisted in its service a wide variety of interests. Toward the close of the eighteenth century, the mutterings of revolt long heard in France found a counterpart

in the rebellion of the American colonies of England, the older movement in its turn gaining reinforcement from the issue of the strife beyond the seas for the wilder and more destructive conflict at home. The excesses of the European conflict erelong produced reaction; reaction, opposed by the dampened but never extinguished spirit of freedom, led to fresh outbreaks of rebellion. But however far in the one direction or the other the pendulum has swung — repression following revolt and revolt engendered by repression — the movement for the abolition of tyranny and the enfranchisement of peoples has continued to make substantial progress down to the present day. The establishment of the North American republic has furthered, rather than hindered, the liberalization of the constitution of the Mother-land. After many vicissitudes France is republican in fact as in name, despite the strength of the reactionary elements—the army, the church, the royalist and imperialistic remnants — by which her inner peace is menaced, and the violence of class and party spirit, which restricts the enjoyment of liberty within her borders. Germany has been delivered from the rule of petty princelings and the weaknesses incident to her divided condition, even though the faults of her present organization warrant apprehension for the

future of the new imperial state. If Italy stands face to face with pressing problems of the social order, as well as with difficulties of finance, she has been redeemed from Papal domination and united under a single head, the liberal monarchy taking the place of the government of many minor rulers. Russia is torn by discontent and plots and borne down by the weight of her autocratic system, so that color of reason is given to the efforts of those misguided men who seek to overthrow all political authority in their dissatisfaction with the existing form; yet she has freed the serfs, and of late her present emperor has given voice to the fondest wish of modern industrial society, the longing for settled peace. In the East the Turk still sits, with his title to kill and maim, to the shame of Christendom, preserved intact; but though the Sick Man lingers, the measure of his iniquity is long since full, and as in the past he has been shorn of lands and power, so we may hope some day to see the entire extinction of his barbarous rule. In fine, throughout the Western world the last century and a half has been characterized by a development of civil liberty which distinguishes it from all other epochs in history.[1]

[1] The examples cited do not include, of course, all the facts in the case, many movements being omitted which would appear in a complete historical statement.

With the enfranchisement of nations the establishment of equality among the citizens, at least in theory, has gone hand in hand. Together, they lead to a third principal factor in the social progress of the era, the demand of the lower classes in society for relief from want or for a larger share of the rewards of labor, and the attempts which have been made to satisfy their needs. This influence has often cut deeper into the foundations of society than the conflict for civil liberty; and, in more instances than one in the period under consideration, has supplied the impulse from which political movements have proceeded. It was dire suffering, for example, which opened the breach between the *seigneurs* in France and the starving peasants who for centuries had looked to the nobles as their rightful lords. It has been the altered conditions of life, individual and social, produced by industrial evolution, that have formed one principal cause of the rise and progress of the later theories of social organization. It is in large measure the misery endured by the denizens of city slums to-day that favors the spread of the socialistic and anarchistic movements of the time. The gulf between the social classes, the cruel misery of the poor, the longing for material betterment, these have been in the past, as they still remain, prolific

sources of that dissatisfaction with the existing social order by which the germs of political change are naturally fostered.

Of itself alone, moreover, the movement which aims at the improvement of the condition of the poor has in its various phases given rise to some of the most remarkable phenomena of the age. Created by disturbing economic, political, and social conditions, the demand for relief has grown as the age has gone on, not only because of the heavy burdens which press upon certain classes in the community, but also because modern industrial development, in multiplying the goods of life, has enlarged the desires of the poor in regard to them; while at the same time the progress of the world in civilization, in education, in refinement, has opened the eyes of the proletaire to larger views of what he needs in order to lead a truly human existence.[1] On the other hand, an essential element in the situation is to be found in the disposition of the higher classes to sympathize with the efforts of the lower, or even, when the strivings of the latter are kept within due bounds, to help them on their way to success. For the rising of the poor, which was begun amid the contempt of their supe-

[1] Cf. Stuckenberg, *Introduction to the Study of Sociology*, pp. 243-244.

riors in wealth and station, has succeeded in gaining the sympathy, often even the active assistance, of the great majority of enlightened men. The unwearied discussion nowadays of the various social problems is only less impressive than the efforts which are constantly making to assist those for whom such questions are matters of practical anxiety rather than of academic debate. Among the educated there is a general interest in all plans for social betterment. Charitable and religious persons are eager to gain a clearer insight than they now possess into the causes of social discontent, in order that they may participate in the effort for its removal. The expert of the chair, who, trained to discuss such questions with scientific calm, at first approaches the subject as part of his professional labors, is often numbered in the event with the ardent leaders of reform. The political leader not only finds a new attitude needful on the part of his government, if it is to be successful in maintaining the authority of the state, but is impelled by nobler reasons also to coöperate in the attempt to succor the distressed members of the community. Churchmen are moved to the same end by purest Christian feeling as well as by the necessity for adjusting religion and theology to the altered circumstances of the time. So the movement from below

is furthered by the sympathy coming from above, until society in its whole extent is affected by its influence.

These three movements in recent history, then, have helped concentrate the thinking of the time on social questions.[1] This tendency of later thought, in turn, has been promoted by the general intellectual development of the age. In the eighteenth century thought, scientific and speculative alike, was for the most part characterized by the adoption of an individualistic, or even an atomistic, point of view, to the subordination of the organic and the collective. Now one of the gravest difficulties of the time is to keep within due bounds the forces which favor integration, in particular to defend the independence and the worth of the individual against the suggestions of opposite doctrine which come from prevailing monistic theories.[2] Science at large involves us in a system of pitiless mechanical law. Organic and social science suggest the possible existence of unities higher than the individual consciousness. History joins with both to bring the material and the mental world, the unit and the group, under the principle of develop-

[1] The remainder of chap. V. appeared in the *Hartford Seminary Record*, May, 1902.

[2] Cf. chap. III., pp. 117–122; chap. IV., pp. 152–157.

ment. Philosophy takes up the strain, when, indeed, it does not reach the principle of its own initiative. Religion and theology discover that they too must take into consideration the new interpretations which are being put upon the facts of nature and the life of man. The problems which this trend of thought suggests, in particular the serious questions which it raises in the field of ethics and theology, are to be counted among the losses which great intellectual changes inevitably occasion. But on the credit side of the balance-sheet must unquestionably be entered juster views of the organization of society and the more hopeful outlook for practical social benefits which results from a better understanding of its nature.

The intellectual alliances of the social spirit and its influence on the progress of opinion show a similar balance of loss and gain. In many instances the exponents of the spirit have come from out the ranks of the radical parties, and its effects have been of a destructive kind. To a considerable degree, in fact, there is reason for the widely disseminated conviction that the doctrines of the social reformers, besides being subversive in themselves of many of the institutions of the traditional social order, have been associated with reflective tendencies which make for the rejection of the accepted

forms of political, philosophical, and religious belief.[1]

And in a broader way, apart from the influence of individuals or of schools of thought, many causes have coöperated to foster an alliance between the social movement and negative reflection. Rebellion against the existing order inevitably brought the recalcitrant party into touch with those who already were questioning the validity of the principles on which society rested. Itself traditional and established, the old régime, as argued in an earlier portion of the present chapter, depended on time-honored views of fundamental truth. By the logic of his convictions, therefore, as well as through the influence of the sceptics, the advocate of social change or the suffering proletaire was lured into the adoption of radical conclusions. This tendency of thought, moreover, did not disappear with the excesses of the Revolution, nor has it been confined in the period since the close of the eighteenth century to the active participants in

[1] The Hegelian leanings of several of the leaders of the earlier socialism have often been noted (L. Stein, *Die Sociale Frage im Lichte der Philosophie*, pp. 501 ff.; F. G. Peabody, *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*, pp. 18–21); while the debt of sociology to Comte, the founder of positivism, is even more familiar. An extreme statement of the irreligious and materialistic tendencies of the socialistic and communistic parties is given by Contzen, *op. cit.*, pp. 170 ff.

the outbreaks which from time to time have disturbed the age. In spite of the changes that have taken place in political and social organization, in spite also of the decline of philosophical as of religious faith, later modern society remains a development from the order which was founded upon the older conceptions, if not a complete survival of it. Hence it is natural for social agitation and negative speculation often to go hand in hand. The truth of Christian doctrine may be denied, for instance, but the organic relation of the historical forms of civilized society in the West to the principles of Christian ethics is beyond dispute. The extremist, again, may aim to do away with private property, sometimes even in his madness, to destroy the institution of the family or all civil authority, but before these results can be accomplished, he must succeed in rooting out of the mind of civilized man not simply the ideas which have controlled his thinking for fifteen centuries and more, but also the habits, the modes of action, which, proceeding from these fixed beliefs, have become ingrained elements in his nature. And if the members of the Left, when they address themselves to this tremendous task, look upon the sceptical theories of the time as the normal complement of their own special convictions, it cannot

be denied that the assumption contains a large measure of truth; although it can be shown, as the present writer is glad to believe in common with many earnest thinkers, that moderate efforts at social reform are out of harmony neither with sound views of philosophy, nor with the sounder, perhaps it should rather be said with the older, interpretations of Christianity.

It has further not escaped remark that a link of connection exists between the negative tone of thought concerning social questions and the environment, physical, intellectual, and moral, amid which these modern movements have had their origin. In general terms it is often said that the present is a materialistic age. This description has reference as well to the tendencies toward practical materialism by which the life and thought of the age have been characterized as to the prevalence at certain stages of the era of materialistic theories of the universe. The age has been one of unexampled material prosperity, due in large part to the marvellous advance of the natural sciences and to the inventive industry which has been brought into play to utilize the discoveries of science for practical ends. Thought has been centred on the physical world because it is here that the mind has gained its chief successes. Life

and life's interests have been altered by the same influence, since the new mastery over nature has at once facilitated the satisfaction of man's physical needs and enlarged his ideas of the material possibilities of his existence. The partial relief from suffering has added poignancy to the misery which remains, and created a longing for goods which before were so far beyond the possibility of attainment that, in effect, they existed beyond the poor man's ken. The case of the bourgeois, moreover, is similar to that of the proletaire. Substitute increased prosperity for relief from suffering and the acquirement of the bare necessaries of life, and the argument holds for the citizen of the middle class as well as for the member of the mass. Even the rich man, it is claimed, is more prone than ever to value his wealth in terms of houses, lands, and creature comforts, rather than as the means of living a more intellectual, refined, and elevated human life.

Has the world become less spiritual, then, and must new Jeremiads be sung over the bankruptcy of civilization in this, the most modern age? Undoubtedly the case is urgent, but if opportunity permitted, reasons might be given for moderating the replies which are often made to such queries by the advocates of conservative views. In whatso-

ever sense, however, these answers may fall out, it must be conceded that the social movements of the time are peculiarly open to negative or materialistic suggestions — theory here as elsewhere affecting practical conviction, and, more significant still, practice giving form and color to the conclusions of abstract thought. For how shall the just demand for daily bread fail to prepossess the mind in favor of that type of reflection which has made more practicable the satisfaction of the need, in favor also of the conclusions concerning fundamental problems in which too often this thought-movement issues? How shall the stunted city-dweller who craves for his children more light, and air, and food than he himself has enjoyed, how shall this man, if he but think at all, refuse to listen to those who urge agnosticism, or materialism, or anarchism, as alone compatible with the trend of thought which has brought the realization of his desires more nearly within his reach? How, since the need is physical, shall the reformer and the philanthropist avoid the temptation to consider the material rather than the spiritual dearth? And how, when men are starving, shall we persuade them that bread is not all they lack? So reflection on the sore points of the social organism often finds itself in harmony with the forces in recent thinking

which make for destructive theories of the world and human life. It is a well-known tendency of temporal suffering to obscure the vision of the world which is beyond. This impulse is now active in an age in which categorical denials of all constructive principles are common and the foremost intellectual movement of the time, itself tolerant of negative interpretations, forms the background of reform. Hence it becomes intelligible that not only the theories of the misguided extremists, but even the conclusions of the more moderate social philosophers, often include an admixture of destructive views.

It must not be assumed, however, that the affiliations of the social movement have been entirely negative, nor is its influence always thrown in favor of sceptical conclusions. On the contrary, it has contributed as few other tendencies of contemporary thought to the development of positive opinion. To it, in the first place, we owe in part an addition to the circle of the sciences. Sociology is not new, indeed, in the sense that the matters of which it treats have in this age for the first time been brought forward as subjects of discussion. For the nature of society and the questions concerning the best form of political and social organization have engaged the attention of thinkers since

the early stages of rational inquiry. And its title to be considered science, at least in its present state, is open to challenge as well because of the indefiniteness of its field and its continued partial reliance on philosophical or semi-philosophical modes of inquiry, as because of the uncertainty and incompleteness which mar its results. Nevertheless, it is evident that, beginning with the work of Comte, the investigation of the questions of the social order has of late been more definitely set apart than ever before under a distinct intellectual discipline; that determined efforts have been put forth to establish the science of society, thus constituted, upon a thoroughly "positive" basis; that sociology, clearly understood, or conceived, as it unfortunately is by many minds, in a loose and general fashion, has in our age been made the subject of eager, often anxious consideration; and that it is destined to engross our thinking until its problems shall have in some degree been solved, or satisfaction been found for the practical needs by which in many cases these problems have been suggested.

No less remarkable than the increase of interest in social questions and the birth of the new science has been the progressive socialization of our views concerning society itself. Abstractly considered, it

is conceivable that reflection on sociological questions might have favored any one of the various theories of social organization. Nevertheless, the more attention is focussed upon social problems, the more likely is it that conclusions in regard to the origin and the nature of the social group will give prominence to the organic rather than the atomistic conception of society; while, under the conditions of recent thinking, it would have been surprising if any other result had ensued. Hence, in part, the change from the errors of a century or two centuries ago to the more accurate analysis of the present time. Then, with what seems to us a monstrous misunderstanding both of the individual and of life in common, it was possible to maintain that man is by nature an entirely self-centred being. Oblivious of the fact that certain of the higher animals possess the germs of the social instinct, political theorists, for example, held that in the primitive condition of humanity the selfish impulses ruled supreme, the beginnings of organization coming in as the result of a later movement, founded upon a compact. Thus the state was looked upon as an artificial product, devised to serve as a check on man's egoistic conduct, in order to secure for each, under certain limitations of his freedom, the safeguards for his interests which the

uncontrolled exercise of the impulses of all had brought into jeopardy. Happily the progress of recent thinking has made such views as these untenable. For, as the later moderns have been compelled to learn by the hard way of escape from established error, man is in truth a social being — so that any theory of his extrinsic or artificial socialization is wrecked at once by the more exact understanding of his nature and his possibilities. He does not need to be made social; as man he is already this, at very least in a potential way. The germs of sociability are in him from the start, however much they may be overlaid by his other and selfish instincts; while the process implied in his advance from the rudiments of political and social life to the developed forms of society is natural in the deepest meaning of the word.

Besides assisting at the birth of the science specifically devoted to its interests, the sociological movement has influenced other members of the family of sciences. This is notably true of psychology. As the renewal of this discipline has gone on under the leading of the physical and the physiological sciences, its associations in recent years have been with the investigations of the laboratory rather than with the researches of the student of society. In fact, it has often been feared that the

new psychology, so called, would prove in the end to be merely a science of brain and nerve, to the exclusion of the mental element in the proper meaning of the term. This anxiety, moreover, has been furthered by the connection of our later psychological studies not only with physics and physiology, but also with biological inquiries. But biology itself has proven in the highest degree sensitive to the attractions of sociological principles; and psychology has advanced from the study of the individual mind to the investigation of the social consciousness. Toward this, it has found its way prepared by inquiries undertaken before the present devotion to social questions began. The psychology of language, whether studied under the name or not, the history and interpretation of institutions, of manners, and of customs, the division of psychology itself entitled folk-psychology[1] or race-psychology, all antedated social psychology in its present forms, and all had gathered materials of value for it in the prosecution of its work. Apart also from the sociological impulse, the labors of the new psychologists have often been of a kind ancillary to the study of society. The very recent researches into the psychology of men in masses,

[1] Founded by Lazarus and Steinthal, *Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft*, vol. I. (1860), pp. 1–73.

as, for instance, the study of the psychical phenomena of crowds or mobs, form a case in point, the laws of this accidental or even abnormal grouping being fitted to throw light on the laws of the more normal and more stable forms of collective association.

The principal questions of social psychology may be classified under two heads: one genetic, the origin of the social consciousness; the other analytic, the nature of the social consciousness, its functions and its laws. The first of these divisions is closely related to genetic psychology at large, as it concerns itself with the origin of the individual or the development of the race. The second as well as the first may be studied either for its own sake, in order to throw light on the psychology of social organization, or for ulterior ends, to aid in the investigations of economics and politics, to clarify and develop the principles of ethics, to further the endeavors of religion and theology in face of the newer problems of the time.

These connections of social psychology give to it an important practical bearing. It is therefore the more necessary to remark that the study of the social consciousness is exposed to danger from certain fundamental misconceptions. These gather about the phrase itself, so that they may be said

to centre in the error which, taken literally, it may be made to contain. The term "social consciousness," or "social mind," signifies those elements in human experience which arise from collective existence, or, more narrowly, the conscious recognition of our relations to other men.[1] In either sense it denotes a function of the individual mind, developed beyond a doubt along with the individual's consciousness of self, and both coming to the birth under the conditions of life in common. Further, it is implied that this phase of experience is characteristic not merely of single members of the social group, but to a greater or less degree of all the various units of which the group is composed. Once more, it is not simply an experience of the primitive distinction between the individual and his fellows, but it parallels, alike in the development of the individual and in the evolution of the social body, the more complex and more highly organized forms which collective existence progressively assumes. Thus there is given free scope for that *rapport* of mind with mind which, although psychologists have begun to make it the subject of absorbing investigation, is yet but im-

[1] Cf. W. Wundt, *Völkerpsychologie*, Bd. I., Th. 1, pp. 1–13; J. Mark Baldwin, *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology, sub voce*, vol. II., p. 534.

perfectly understood; and there spring up those manifestations of mental life, crystallized into institutions, laws, and customs, which in a sense may be termed conscious and objective in one. Just here the danger lies. The social consciousness is the consciousness of individuals grouped in relations, in so far as it is dependent on these relations, or concerns itself with them or with the social body of which the individuals in question constitute the elements. The temptation, which is increased by the current enthusiasm for social inquiries and the prevailing tendency to emphasize the importance of social phenomena, is to raise this function of minds in common into a common mind, to ascribe to the social consciousness as it were a distinct existence, to look upon it, often without realizing the significance of the idea, as forming to some degree a consciousness or mind above, and added to, the various individual minds with the recognition of which the argument began. For this assumption there is no sufficient evidence. It yields a convenient analogy, as the biological view of society under the figure of an organism has often proved a useful means of elucidating social problems.[1] But like the latter, it is not to

[1] Cf. Herbert Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, part II.; Leslie Stephen, *Science of Ethics*, chap. I., § IV., and chap. III.

be interpreted as literal fact;[1] and however valuable it may be when it is used by instructed and careful thinkers — and even by such the danger is not always escaped — it is liable to abuse by the many who nowadays engage in sociological inquiries without adequate preparation.

There is a similar need for definition in regard to the bearing of recent social movements upon ethics. But before attention is directed to the somewhat formal task of analyzing the additions to ethical theory that have been suggested by social progress, it is a pleasant duty to note the general quickening of ethical interest consequent upon the spread of the social spirit. Often it is supposed that this advance consists solely in the development of altruistic feeling on the part of those who sympathize with the sufferings of the downtrodden classes in society. But the causes of the gain, and the sentiments which they evoke, lie deeper even than the spirit of beneficent compassion. For it is evident that the study of society at large, and, in particular, the study of those pressing problems which in this age most naturally recur to mind when the social question is mentioned, alike tend toward the recognition of the interrelation of ethical and social laws. So

[1] At very least not in its entirety; see Wundt, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

it has come about that not only the moralist and the theologian have of late shown a remarkable appreciation of this connection, but many also who approach the study of society from other directions, the biologist, the economist, the political theorist, and the sociologist by profession — since they too perceive, on the one hand, that moral conduct is a chief condition of social welfare, and on the other, that ethical life is itself conditioned by social forces. Or, as the two contrasted principles have been phrased in a German discussion of the subject, the social question an ethical question, and the ethical question a social question.[1] Even the consideration of social needs on the part of those who know the ills of our modern society from poignant personal experience is not always devoid of ethical significance; although, as too often happens, the bitter sense of personal misery may make them an easy prey to an undiscriminating passion for relief. For the discussion of claims, however self-centred it may be, implies some consideration of rights; and denunciation of the more fortunately situated members of society is idle unless obligation can be imputed, so that amid the

[1] Cf. T. Ziegler, *Die sociale Frage eine sittliche Frage*, and, in reply, F. Staudinger, "Die sittliche Frage eine sociale Frage," *Philosophische Monatschefte*, vol. XXIX., pp. 30–53, 197–219.

insistent clamor for social betterment there may be heard from time to time notes of sobriety and justice rising above the cries of ignorant rage.

Moreover, it is important to note that this development of ethical interest is not confined to matters of theory, but makes its way into the sphere of practice also. The movement merits especial remark as it affects the representatives of the sciences not directly concerned with morals. These are often seen proving their faith by their works. In particular, the younger men among them are found pressing into College Settlements, People's Palaces, Toynbee Halls, and other establishments of a similar kind, where — in addition to the efforts that are made to relieve the distressed or to divert their minds from the hardships of their lot — there are taught not merely the laws of health or the conditions of success in life, not merely the elements of national history and the principles of civil liberty, but where are inculcated, also, the value of industry and thrift, the virtues of temperance, purity, and justice, in some cases even the elements of religious truth. Indeed, it may be doubted whether the pupils in these institutions, or their instructors, can always point out the dividing-line between physiology or politics

or sociology, and ethics. In fact the question might puzzle wiser heads than theirs. Probably it would be most accurate to say that here, as at many places where allied sciences reach their point of contact, the sharp delimitation attempted in former days has become impossible. For theory and practice unite to show the traditional separation of these departments replaced by a sense of their interconnection and partial identity. And this is great gain, gain not merely in the clearness of ethical perception, but in the new enthusiasm, the moral reinvigoration which accompanies it.[1]

In the sphere of ethics proper, the influence of social progress has been most direct and most important in relation to a particular division of the moral life. This is often called the department of social ethics; but the term "social ethics," like its fellow, the social consciousness, is one that requires careful explanation. Evidently, as it is employed to-day, it includes more than the class of moral obligations which formerly were discussed under the head

[1] A possible limitation of the conclusions expressed in this and the preceding paragraph is to be found in the contention that the sciences in question properly deal with "what is" and not with "what ought to be," in particular, that the field of sociology includes the facts and laws of social life and no more. Cf. Stuckenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 201–233.

of duties to other men. Nor is its meaning identical with that of altruism or altruistic obligation, terms which in recent discussions have often been substituted for the older phrase. For these other-regarding duties had been recognized long before the rise of modern culture. Kindness and charity were commended even by heathen writers; and since the advent of Christianity they have formed one chiefest element in the moral consciousness of the civilized world, or if at any time they have been neglected, it has been because the principles of the Founder of the Christian Faith have been suffering eclipse in the minds and lives of his professed followers. Therefore, however grateful the world should be for the emphasis that has been laid upon these sacred virtues by the social movement of the time, in principle the new ethic cannot be analyzed into such elements alone.

Perhaps the best clew to the explanation of the matter will be found by returning to the analysis of the social consciousness which was attempted from the standpoint of psychology. On examination, one central factor in this proved to be a highly developed sense of sociality, or in the terms which have been employed in this discussion, a developed consciousness of social relations. This,

moreover, (as was also noted,) acquires so much of strength and definiteness that it leads to the idea of the solidarity of all the members of the social group, rising at times to a conception of society as itself an independent conscious unity. Hence arises the belief that man, who is recognized as a moral personality while at the same time he forms a component member of the group, has duties not merely to his fellows as individuals, but also to the social organism of which he is a part, and in the advantages of which he willy-nilly shares. This conclusion, further, combines with the political impulses of the time to yield the emphasis which now is laid upon the obligations of the citizen. It is incumbent on the individual, so we have come to believe, to take his part in the government of the political body within whose borders his lot is cast, in so far as the right of participation is accorded him by fundamental law. In his town, county, or state, in his commune, his electoral circle, his parliamentary district, or his shire, it is his duty, as men now judge, not merely to exercise his rights as a private member of the body politic, but so much as in him lies, and so far as opportunity belongs to him, to see to it that just laws are framed, that established laws are respected and

duly executed, that public officials perform their functions in an honest and efficient manner, that the standard of public no less than of private life is kept pure and true, even that, in regard to external and foreign relations, the principles of honor and peace are observed among the nations.

It is very easy, no doubt, to sneer at such a programme, easy in the spirit of reactionary officialdom to denounce it as revolutionary, or at least as beyond the possibility of execution, even when viewed from the standpoint of the peoples which enjoy the freest political institutions. The popular demagogue and his dangerous arts, the ignorance of your would-be village Hampdens — cries like these will furnish convenient cover for attacks on the political virtue of the multitude; while the ill-success of the citizens in securing purity in public life, say in the matter of the tariff and the trusts, or in influencing foreign policy, for instance in the approval of arbitration treaties, may be cited to give point to an otherwise vapid jest. Nevertheless, his will be an idle task who shall endeavor to disprove the increasing importance of public opinion in the government of modern states, as it is also undeniable, and this is the point with which we are here most nearly

concerned, that there is developing in the modern mind a healthy and beneficent, at times a highly effective, sense of civic responsibility.

The heightened sense of solidarity does not exhaust itself, however, in the production of new ethical principles relating to the political and social order, but promotes as well the consciousness of duties to other men in their social relations. Here the social impulse is met halfway by an appreciation of the disorders which afflict society. So from the union of several tendencies it results that the modern mind gains a sympathetic perception of the needs of the poor, not merely as individuals, but as they are gathered into groups or classes. It is not the chance beggar at the door craving a passing dole that men think of now when they ponder the problems of benevolence, nor merely the belated wayfarer beseeching food or shelter. The thinker of to-day is oppressed rather by the belief that great masses of his fellow-beings are existing, it it can hardly be termed living, on a plane below the level of normal human development; that this miserable state of affairs is due, in considerable measure at least, to the fact that the conditions of their existence are such as to make normal life impossible; and, finally, that these conditions again, at least in part, are grounded in the very constitution

of modern society. Thus we are affected not so much by the contemplation of isolated cases of suffering as by the existence, one might almost say the necessary existence, of a class of underbred, underfed, under-educated, half-cared-for beings, whose lot is only the more pitiable because the progress of society has taught them to crave the humanizing elements in culture, which, together with the necessities of physical life, the conditions of their existence deny to them.

The primary significance, therefore, of this phase of recent ethical development consists in the realization of duties to other men as they are assembled in groups or classes. But since the miseries from which the classes suffer arise from causes common in the several cases to the members of the group, it is further perceived that the attack on social ills must be conducted along the lines of collective endeavor. The disease springs ultimately from social sources, so a cure is to be expected not from individual attempts at palliation, but from organized exertion to remove the causes of the malady. Thus, for example, instead of the occasional charity of the traditional benevolence, the goal of those who now most wisely seek to improve the condition of the poor is found in the charity organization, whose task it is to canvass the entire situa-

tion in a town or city or district, to apportion relief in such a way that the number of those in need of assistance may be diminished to the greatest possible extent, and unceasingly to labor to eradicate so far as may be possible the permanent causes of their poverty. So, again, where formerly it was left to the conscientious physician, or even to the popular lecturer, to inculcate the laws of hygiene or to endeavor to secure their observance, the care of the public health in well-ordered communities is now committed to regularly appointed officials, with legal authority to safeguard the physical well-being of society.

The different bodies that make it their object to accomplish these ends assume a variety of forms. In some cases they are simple associations of the charitably disposed in a given vicinity, without regard to questions of creed or social station. In others, the group may be a band of religious persons in a single church or a society recruited from all the churches, as our ecclesiastical organizations awaken to the opportunity for carrying on a work so clearly in harmony with the principles of Christianity. Or it may not be a group specifically organized for benevolent purposes, but one which existed before the origin of recent movements for social reform and which is continued apart from

them. For it is a further characteristic feature of the ethical consciousness under consideration, that it ascribes these newly acknowledged responsibilities to forms of social and politicial organization which have sprung from the general conditions of social life. Hence, to the duties toward groups or classes on the part of individuals and of the corporate bodies called into being for the satisfaction of such obligations, there is added the recognition of these duties as incumbent on the higher classes of society in relation to their less fortunate fellows, or even on the representatives of the civil government. It may be a town council, or board of aldermen, or state legislature, or parliamentary assembly, which takes steps in the direction of social betterment; being moved, in a large proportion of such cases, by the pressure of public opinion to enact the demands of the more enlightened portion of the community into laws aimed at the general good. A considerable element in modern society, even, and one which includes among its members besides the turbulent foes of all social order not a few thinkers of repute, drives this last principle to an extreme, maintaining that the state should not merely exert itself for the benefit of the citizens within the limits of the present political organization, but should take over

the ownership and the management of the means of public welfare.

At the end of the analysis, therefore, the counterpart is reached of the principle which was discussed at the beginning. The social movement, as was there explained, is instrumental in the genesis of the newer realizations of civic obligation. Here it becomes evident that the same force has in recent experience given rise to fresh demands upon the state, and to an enlarged interpretation of the duties devolving upon the body politic. Concerning this phase of the matter there exist, no doubt, grave differences of opinion. How far may the state, how far should the state, increase its control over the conditions of individual and social welfare? In how far may it, or should it, assume the regulation of personal life, the management of trade and manufacture, the control of the means of communication and of the instruments of public convenience and public comfort? To what extent may it, or should it, alter the established laws in regard to the possession, the enjoyment, and the transmission of property? These are questions which are variously answered by experts, and which the present writer claims no special authority to discuss. It is probable that not more than a minority of educated

men would so view them as to accept the principles of the extreme collectivists, expecting the advent of the social millennium from the abolition of private ownership. Short of this extreme, however, there is a numerous class whose members take up a favorable attitude toward efforts on the part of the political body to ameliorate the conditions of social life, and are disposed to acquiesce in the assumption by the civil government of larger powers than it now exercises, since they believe that such an extension of its functions is necessary in order to the execution of the needed reforms. This phase of thought represents a distinct tendency of contemporary opinion. There is happily a strong repugnance in the minds of the majority to the doctrines of those who make it their avowed aim, without the use of force or with it, to compass the overthrow of the existing social order. But, at the same time, there exists a widely disseminated conviction that much is needed to be done in the way of social improvement which the state alone can accomplish, and that, in order to the doing of it, it is incumbent upon the state to go beyond the present limitations of its powers. In this way the socialization of ethics culminates in a new view of the functions of the state. Duties to classes by classes or organizations

issue in duties to classes or to the whole social group on the part of the corporate representatives of society.

There is ground for hesitation in approaching the relation of the social movement to religion and theology. For although the subject is one of manifest importance, the discussion is embarrassed by the mass of errant opinion which too often gathers round it. Sometimes it is maintained that religion, taken in its social applications, is of itself sufficient to heal the wounds under which society suffers, no heed being given to the influence of economic, political, and other non-moral forces on the conditions of social welfare. Sometimes, with the impetuosity of imperfect information, authorized representatives of the Christian Faith contend that social progress and the religion of Christ so exactly correspond that the church must be transformed into an institution devoted exclusively to the promotion of social ends. To avoid vagaries of this kind requires knowledge and careful thinking, knowledge greater and more exact, thought more deliberate and circumspect, it is to be feared, than are given to the subject by many impassioned orators who fill the air with the proclamation of their religious panaceas for the social maladies of the time.

And yet the socialization of religion does form an important topic for consideration. To begin with, it is an evident part of the progress of the age. In the last analysis, it is true, religion is an individual and personal matter. This is a principle which finds its witness both in the psychology of the personal life and in the history of religion itself, those forms of belief proving most effective which make their appeal most directly to the heart and conscience. In this particular our Puritan ancestors undoubtedly had the better of the argument, whether we are prepared or not to accept all the bristling points of doctrine with which their systems abounded, or to observe all the rules of conduct which they held incumbent on the Christian man. But religion has relations also which go beyond the circumference of the individual life. This is the great truth which the social movement of the age is bringing into the focus of religious thought, not merely for the criticism of religion and its amendment, but as a means to its progress and further conquests. In the noble phrase of Canon Fremantle, written now twenty years ago, "Religion is in its own nature most sociable";[1] and as a realization of the fact makes

[1] W. H. Fremantle (now Dean of Ripon), *The World as the Subject of Redemption*, p. 256.

its way more and more into the religious life of the time, there is a noticeable gain in several different directions.

As a result, religion, on the one hand, is able to fulfil its mission better in relation to the conditions under which the men of to-day are living. Creeds may differ, not only in their minutiæ, but also in the essential articles of faith, though the cry that doctrine is of no importance for life only voices, for the most part, the world's despair because it finds itself perplexed to decide which, if any, doctrines to believe. But all the sects agree in this, that it is a paramount obligation of religious men to promote the things which make for purity and temperance and righteousness and justice and peace; to bind up the broken-hearted, to give liberty to the captive, to open the eyes of them that are blind. And the social movement brings at once a motive and an opportunity for performing these duties on a scale greater than in the past, and in ways more in harmony with the spirit of the time. Hence arises a second advantage for religion at the present juncture. By its attention to social questions it is brought into closer touch with the moving forces in modern life; and since there is no apologetic so effective as the evidence of experience, the resultant benefit

to the cause of belief is of a most valuable kind. For when religion adopts the well-being of society as among its own concerns, while at the same time it extends a relieving hand to the many who are alienated by their sufferings from faith in God as well as from confidence in the sentiments of his professed worshippers, it secures a new hold upon the mind of the world. Long it has been complained by the parties to the great debate that there is a breach between religion and culture. Here is suggested a means of overcoming the alienation, or at least of taking useful steps toward that end. In the revival of religious feeling and the renaissance of faith which have of late begun to manifest themselves in the English-speaking countries — less markedly, perhaps, in Continental Europe — this reciprocal approach of religion and society has played an important part. And in so far as the churches shall rise to the measure of their opportunities, it is also reasonable to expect an increased constructive influence from the movement in the happier era which we hope may soon succeed the doubt and darkness of recent years.[1]

In the accomplishment of this, its newer work, however, religion will not be called upon to abandon the sphere assigned to it by time-honored

[1] Cf. chap. III., pp. 116 ff.

usage. On the contrary, its great objects will be the more successfully attained, the more strictly, with the soberness and caution which always befit them, its representatives refrain from the vagaries of the enthusiast, refusing to divert their energies to labors which lie outside their proper field. What is needed, is not so much a transformation of the church as an enlargement of its sympathies. Religion is not to be resolved into social feeling, it is to look upon the interests of society as its own, and to apply its sacred principles to them with all possible earnestness and power. The minister of religion will do well not to assume the functions of the economist, the political theorist, the statesman, the educator, or the professional social reformer,[1] but to labor that the newer forms of human endeavor may also be considered matters of duty, that the new ideals may be sanctified by the infusion of the religious spirit, that religious men may be quick to hearken to the claims of social obligation. Up to the limit of his strength, and wherever it is possible for him to participate in secular affairs without compromising his religious standing, he will do well to bring religion to bear upon matters of public moment, to sympathize with suffering on the

[1] Cf. F. G. Peabody, *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*, pp. 35–36.

part of classes and communities as he long has done with the miseries of the individual, to seek to assuage social distress, to study to uplift the downtrodden and the fallen classes in society, to strive to check all forms of social oppression and wrong. This is not socialism. It is not even that vague and curious growth which sometimes masquerades under the title, "Social Christianity." It is simply religious principle and religious practice developed in harmony with the progress of the age.[1]

But, the question will be raised, How does this programme agree with the principles of the Christian Faith? Granting that so modest a participation in the social movement is proper for religion at large, it will still be asked, Is it in accord with the tenets of that religion which in its several forms is the dominant faith of the civilized world? To this query various answers will be given by the adherents of the different schools. Some, with a certain indefiniteness of thought which appears to be characteristic of the enthusiastic reformers of society, will urge that Christianity is in its

[1] In order to guard against misunderstanding, it should perhaps be added that there is no intention to ignore the large amount of valuable work of the kind demanded in the text that has already been accomplished within the bounds of the existing religious organizations; but rather, with grateful recognition of what has been effected, to urge its further development.

essence a means to social progress; summarizing their conclusions at times in a phrase which to them seems evident truth, but which to the mind of others verges hard on irreverence, "Christ the first socialist." In the opinion of the writer, however, this position, to which moreover reference has already been made,[1] demands but little attention. For it lacks a sound exegetical basis, and it is unsupported by history; while it adds to an imperfect acquaintance with the canons of Biblical interpretation a confusion in thinking which serves to render the reasonings of its advocates of more than doubtful validity. A party opposed to the former, and one whose views are more worthy of consideration, will challenge any alteration of religious methods in the direction of increased social activity as a departure from the teachings and example of our Lord. His method, it may forcibly be urged, emphasized the salvation of individuals rather than the reformation of classes; or, to put it more accurately, he centred his labors and those of his disciples upon the redemption of the individual, leaving the redemption of the community to follow from the regeneration of its members. Now, beyond all question, this is a more accurate view of Christ's ministry than the

[1] p. 225, above.

one which has just been dismissed. In regard to it, I can only repeat with reverence that which has already been remarked in relation to the general question of individual and social religion.[1] Like scientific analysis and historical experience, so the example of the Master points to the permanent significance of personality in the matter of the religious life. His aim was to enlighten the conscience, to purify the heart, to redeem the life. He allied himself with no political party; he announced no set of social maxims; he considered no questions and advanced no conclusions in regard to tendencies of thought and life so foreign to the movements of his time that they have come into the focus of discussion only through the later developments of modern culture.

Nevertheless, it would be idle to overlook the elements of social teaching present in the gospels. For although our Lord emphasized so distinctly the necessity of personal regeneration, it is evident from many features in his doctrine and his ministry that he recognized also the reality of social relations;[2] while, in addition to the redemption of individuals, he set before his followers the ideal of

[1] p. 226, above.

[2] As Professor Shailer Mathews has shown in his admirable treatise, *The Social Teaching of Jesus*.

a regenerate society. In this direction point not only his serene participation in the joys of social life, to the standing confusion of the precisian and the ascetic, not only his insistence on the sanctity of the family, his active compassion for the down-trodden and the suffering, his belief in the brotherhood of man, but, above all, his conception of the kingdom of God as the goal of Christian progress. Toward this kingdom the Disciples were to aspire; for its coming they were enjoined to labor and to pray; in distinction to the kingdoms of the earth, its nature was to be spiritual and eternal, but it was also to be an organic body, under the headship of God manifested in his Son; and it was destined in its extension to cover all the earth.[1]

Moreover, these features of Christ's teaching had been foreshadowed by the work of his forerunners, if indeed it may not be said that certain phases of social religion come out more clearly in the best moments of the history of Israel than they do in the gospel story. For, in addition to the theocratic organization of the nation and the sense of solidarity which came to the chosen people from their relation to Jehovah, it is noticeable that the Prophetical Scriptures, as many writers of late have shown, are pervaded by social ideals of a noble

[1] Cf. Mathews, *op. cit.*, chap. III.

type.[1] Thus the institutions of the national faith and the preaching of social righteousness alike encouraged escape from the one-sided individualism which has too often prevailed in modern religious thinking, as in other departments of modern culture. Or, to return from the Old Covenant to the history of the New, there was a manifest development of analogous principles in the Apostolic church. In the work and the writings of the Apostle Paul, for instance, it is impossible to ignore the social factor. Was there ever a man more insistent than Paul upon the salvation of the individual? And yet, how clear vision he gained of a general redemption as he rose above the limitations of Judaism to his conception of Christianity as the universal faith. As before Israel had been the subject of divine favor, so now unto the Gentiles also was grace given that they might become God's children, and might constitute part of the one body of Christ.[2] Not only were souls to be redeemed, but also the age, until the present evil world should be replaced by one in which righteousness should prevail at the coming of the Lord. The ideal of the heavenly inheritance

[1] Cf. George Adam Smith, *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*, Lect. VII., *The Book of Isaiah*, vol. I., pp. 14, 40 ff.; Fremantle, *op. cit.*, Lect. II.

[2] 1 Corinthians xii. 12–31; Ephesians ii. 11–22, iv. 1–16.

is citizenship in a celestial commonwealth, wherein the believer has birthright share, even as the apostle himself was Roman born and knew by experience the benefits of citizenship in the earthly empire.[1] In fine, throughout the Scriptures, Old Testament and New, there runs a note of solidarity which demands as real recognition and consideration as the emphatic insistence on individual sin and need. In this way the present age is being helped by the movement of secular thinking to a better understanding of some of the deeper things of our religion. With the Prophets, with the Master, with Paul, with John, with Augustine, and with many of the profounder minds through the later Christian centuries, we are learning to appreciate the organic and the common, as well as the individual and the personal elements in the Faith.

Finally, in regard to whatever of social development may fall outside these boundaries, it will be important to adopt a broad, even an expansive, view of Christianity rather than to cherish a narrow or mechanical interpretation of it. It may very well be that many of the questions of modern society, and many of the principles essential to the treatment of them, are not alluded to in any part of the Bible. Nay, for one, the writer would be

[1] Philippians iii. 20 (cf. Galatians iv. 25–26); Acts xxii. 25–29.

as earnest in resisting attempts to read into the Scriptures all the round of current social doctrine as in deprecating the view which looks upon them as concerned solely with the religion of individual men. But there were two forms of preparation common to the religion of Israel and to Christianity for the phases of thought and life to which this chapter has been devoted. One of these has just been noted, the elements of solidarity and sociality which, though they manifested themselves in varying degrees at various stages of Revelation, are characteristic of it as a whole. The second is broader than the first, but less direct, in spite of its universal application. It is best summed up in the words of Paul to the church at Philippi, "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report" — these things are in the highest sense Christian, for they breathe the very spirit of the gospel. In so far as the progress of the world increases the number and enlarges the scope of the things to which this spirit may be applied, it is not only the privilege, but, if I mistake not, the bounden duty of Christian men to bring them within the circle of their earnest interest. This duty again has itself a twofold aspect. It is at once evangelistic and

apologetic. Such possibilities of extending the range of religious activity mean, on the one hand, an open door for fresh usefulness in service, they imply a new and richer opportunity for hastening the coming of the kingdom of God on earth. But they also bring an apologetic responsibility. For if Christianity with the lengthening centuries shall prove adapted, as it has in the past, to the growing needs of the world, new evidence of its truth will be created by the mere fact of this, its plastic sufficiency. But if considerable areas of human life shall be found foreign to its principles and impervious to its influence, then — though with reverence be it said — its truth will be exposed to new and grave attack, for it will have shown itself of less than universal application. Therefore Christian men and the Christian church should shrink from the peril of bringing discredit on the Faith by a timorous literalism, which, forgetting the example of the Master and his early followers, hesitates to live in the light of open day, to bring religion into touch with the needs and the movements of the times. Sympathy for their fellow-men and regard for Christian truth alike demand that they play well their part by facing with resolution the problems thrust upon them by the circumstances of their own social life.

CHAPTER VI

THE APPEAL TO FAITH

"In periods which have given birth to a sceptical philosophy, one never looks in vain for the complementary phenomenon of mysticism. The stone which is offered by doubt in place of bread is incapable of satisfying the impulse after knowledge, and when the intellect grows weary and despairing the heart starts out on the quest for truth. Then its path leads inward, the mind turns in upon itself, seeks to learn the truth by inner experience and life, by inward feeling and possession, and waits in quietude for the divine illumination."

So a writer who has been often quoted in this essay introduces his discussion of the mystical movements which in Germany characterized the era of transition from mediæval to modern times.[1] The application of Professor Falckenberg's conclusions, however, cannot be limited to this particular epoch, nor to the special type of thought which he had in mind. Not only in the age of the Reformation and the Renaissance, but in all

[1] Falckenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

epochs of transitional culture, there are conditions present which favor the appeal to faith. Not only do the pure mystics, in the full meaning of that much-abused term,[1] take refuge from the difficulties of reasoned thinking in the recourse to faith and feeling, but inquirers of varied types, who in eras of doubt appreciate the value of ideal conviction, as they feel its need, but who are unable to discover tenable grounds of belief through the unaided exercise of the pure theoretical reason.

The prevalence of this tendency in the classical eras of transition has been illustrated by examples cited in the early part of the present inquiry.[2] In very recent years the subject has been brought to the attention, first of the English-speaking world, and later of thinkers in other lands, by the arguments of a distinguished American scholar, whose views in regard to any question of philosophy or psychology command and deserve respect. More important even than the specific content of the conclusions drawn by Professor James in *The Will to Believe*[3] were the spirit which inspired them and

[1] For a discriminating short account of mysticism see A. Seth, *sub voce, Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9th ed., vol. XVII., pp. 128 ff.; compare with this, however, W. R. Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, Lecture I., and Appendix A, pp. 335–348.

[2] Chap. I., pp. 35 ff.

[3] William James, *The Will to Believe, and other Essays in Popular Philosophy*, 1897.

the method, or as his opponents might put it, the absence of method, by which they were reached. Born of the age's conflict with its doubt as this had been reproduced in the reflection of one of its eminent thinkers, the thesis argued amounted to a defence of the fundamental articles of moral and theistic belief on the basis of ideal conviction, it being premised that the doctrines in question are incapable of proof or disproof on purely intellectual grounds, and the entire argument being projected on the background of an empirical philosophy of knowledge.[1]

Professor James was happy, moreover, in the time at which his Essays were published in permanent form. Already the thought of the age had passed from the stage of confident destructive activity to the weariness of moral and even theoretical negation, which indicates the beginning of reaction toward more positive views of truth. In particular, a series of notable works conceived in a spirit like to that which animates the author of *The Will to Believe*, if not in every case from the same point of view, had in Great Britain and the United States awakened new hope concerning the fundamental elements of spiritual belief. In a brilliant if somewhat superficial book, Mr. Ben-

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 11–19; and the whole of the opening Essay.

jamin Kidd had argued that the evolutionary process in its social manifestations is dependent upon "an ultra-rational sanction."[1] Mr. Balfour had signalized his leisure from the cares of state by adding to his much-misunderstood *Defence of Philosophic Doubt*[2] a second treatise, *The Foundations of Belief*,[3] in which, with an echo alike of Hume's scepticism and of Bishop Butler's analogical method, he maintains that the necessary implications of natural science have their parallel in postulates that serve to support the truths of æsthetical, ethical, and religious life. Mr. Romanes, the "Physicus" of the *Candid Examination of Theism*, published in 1878, had left at his death in 1894 his notes[4] for a defence of faith as the instrument not merely of ideal conviction in general, but of full catholic orthodoxy. And it may be added that the same change in the tone of contemporary thought has been shown by the progress of opinion since Professor James's work appeared. The Gifford Lectures[5] of Dr. James Ward, although the subject is approached by theoretical argument rather than by way of the

[1] *Social Evolution*, 1894, new ed., 1898.

[2] 1879. [3] 1895; 8th (revised) edition, 1901.

[4] *Thoughts on Religion*, edited by C. Gore. Cf. chap. II., pp. 81–82.

[5] *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, 1899.

appeal to faith; the later essays in the series[1] by John Fiske, written from the standpoint of evolution and ending with the lecture on "Life Everlasting," posthumously published; James's own later treatise, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*,[2] with its wealth of psychological data and its broad conclusions concerning the reality and the implications of religious phenomena — these, to name but a few of the many works which might be cited, have given further token that the agnostic movement has passed its time of culmination.

The "faith-philosophy" then is not singular among the currents of contemporary opinion. It is also far from novel in the history of reflection. Considered in and for itself, it forms one of the typical analyses of the ethical and religious consciousness, in contrast to the endeavors of rationalism to express the momenta of religion entirely in terms of theoretical cognition. For the purposes of this discussion, however, it is more important to notice that in its origin the appeal to faith is often a product of reaction. In some instances it makes its appearance in recoil from a dominant intellectualism, protest being raised against the excessive

[1] *The Destiny of Man*, 1884; *The Idea of God*, 1885; *Through Nature to God*, 1900; *Life Everlasting*, 1901.

[2] 1902.

rationalization of spiritual principles which unfits them to be springs of conduct, and the diversion of effort from the practical pursuit of ideal ends to their theoretical formulation. This form of the doctrine of faith easily allies itself with mystical impulses. Its classical types are found in the mysticism of the Middle Ages, which stood over against the speculative theology of the Scholastic doctors, and in the Pietism of the eighteenth-century Christians in Germany.

But the faith-philosophy which is inspired by hostility to an overweening intellectualism rarely attains an unmixed development. In the genesis of the movement reaction against the current form of reflective thinking is commonly reinforced by motives suggested by the content of speculation. Opposition to the destructive results of inquiry mingles with criticism of the method by which inquiry is conducted, and both issue in a depreciation of the rights of the understanding in favor of the claims of the heart and conscience. It is this feature of the theory which explains its characteristic emergence in periods of intellectual confusion. The essence of the difficulty in such eras is that thought is in a state of flux. Ideal interests are in jeopardy, or are judged to be so, because the tendencies of the time run counter to principles

which previously have served as the foundations of belief, or, it may even be, to those on which in reason and by common consent the validity of the accepted creed depends. The old convictions are shaken; the new spiritual system, like the new theoretical synthesis, is not yet at hand. To relieve the crisis men turn to the witness of faith. In weakness, some take refuge from problems that they cannot face in the peace which submission to the demands of the ideal nature itself affords. With confident assurance the dogmatic believer retains his creed or commends it to his fellows, in disregard of the questions raised by scholars or created by the progress of the mind. More nobly, finer souls, when the light grows dim and the understanding gropes uncertain of its way, listen in quiet for the voices of the spirit, which are never silent for those who wait to hear.

Of greater moment than the sources of the appeal to faith is the question of its legitimacy.[1] In order to gain an answer to this question, it will be necessary to undertake a certain amount of analysis. "Faith" is interpreted in two different ways by those who make it their ultimate reliance. By some it is held to be an independent source of ideas; more often it signifies a

[1] Cf. chap. I., pp. 41–44.

medium of assent, and not infrequently the former usage allies itself with the latter or passes over into it. The first of these definitions, again, divides into several subordinate forms, of very different meanings and unequal value. Chief among them is the analysis which makes faith or an assumed faith-faculty the unique organ of the religious consciousness; holding in particular that faith in this sense — the "divine illumination" of the mystics, the "spiritual vision" of theology and literature — escapes the limitations and the difficulties which beset the intellectual cognition of the transcendent world.

In regard to this form of the doctrine later psychology has reached a decisive conclusion. Granting for the sake of argument that it is possible to make use of the faculty hypothesis at all in the analysis of mental functions,[1] it is clear that faith cannot be considered an original "faculty," distinct from the other powers of the mind. It is on the contrary a complex and derivative function. It combines phases of cognition, of emotion, of conation in a way which excludes it from the class of mental elements, in

[1] Cf. Baldwin's *Dictionary of Philosophy*, *s. v.*, vol. I., p. 369; J. Sully, *The Human Mind*, vol. I., pp. 70–72; G. T. Ladd, *Psychology: Descriptive and Explanatory*, pp. 49–60; and the further bibliographical references given by these writers.

spite of the fact that it is a characteristic psychosis, which may well engage the attention of scientific psychologists at the same time that it supplies the philosopher of religion with data of primary importance.

The psychological view, moreover, affords aid in the principiant valuation, for it gives at once the clew to the element of truth which the theory under consideration contains and the means of exposing the exaggeration which this truth too often suffers. The faith-philosopher judges correctly when he rejects the merely cognitive or theoretical analysis of the religious consciousness in order to emphasize its affective and volitional moments. His argument is sound, in the second place, when he contends that if a just appraisal of religion is to be secured, the peculiar nature of the religious consciousness calls for the use of tests in measure different from those which are employed in estimating the validity of pure theoretical principles. But in regard to both these phases of the spiritual problem, it is easy to pass from the recognition of factors which are often neglected to an equally one-sided overestimation of them. For much too often the advocates of the appeal to faith fail to content themselves with the direction of attention to the elements

in religion which the intellectualist overlooks, and go on to a complete denial of the competence of the intellect in spiritual concerns. Instead of intellect they seek to elevate the ideal nature to the throne. Reason in such matters halts, they argue, whereas conscience and intuition give no uncertain sound; hence the latter should be listened to, and the former refused a voice, in spiritual decisions. Adequate knowledge is the privilege of the few, but all may enjoy the witness of the inner light; therefore belief must rest upon illumination, unless it is to be an entirely unjustifiable requirement of dogmatic authority.[1] Or by another road they reach a somewhat different division between faith and reason, although one which is no less destructive than those which have just been mentioned to the interests of mind and heart alike. Joining hands with thinkers who oppose at once the method and the results of faith, they contend at this point that the principles of religion, which they hold to be the products of feeling only, can never be formulated in terms of thought, can never be construed as knowledge, in fine, that the contraposition of theoretical and spiritual truth

[1] Cf. Rousseau, *Émile*, IV., "Profession de Foi du Vicaire Savoyard."

which deeper minds have so much deplored is the normal condition of affairs.[1]

The case is similar with regard to man's knowledge of the Absolute. Undoubtedly, — as Augustine knew, as Anselm knew, as our later age has begun to relearn the lesson which thought has too long despised, — spiritual aspiration counts for much in the process by which man is led to postulate an infinite ground of all things.[2] And his consciousness of the Supreme is less hampered by the limitations of finite thinking when it takes its tone and color from the practical rather than the theoretical workings of the mind. For the outcome of the affective processes is less defined, and so less limited, than the products of pure intellection, since the functions themselves are less definite; it is less subject to the forms of time and sense than these, because, in contrast to the content of knowledge, it is less run in the objective mould. But it is idle to maintain, either that spiritual vision yields an idea of God which includes no cognitive elements, or that the quietest, when he gives himself to the contemplation of God's person, escapes all the difficulties which beset

[1] Cf. chap. III., pp. 90–92.

[2] Cf. Lotze, *Mikrokosmus* (3d ed.), vol. III., pp. 560–562; *Grundzüge der Religionsphilosophie*, § 6.

the common consciousness of the divine. Close analysis would at once lay bare the fallacy; but the truth is perhaps more strikingly shown by the perils by which the position of the faith-philosopher is surrounded. As soon as he abandons "thought" for "vision," he is in danger of leaving behind him the safeguards as well as the restrictions which the intellectual processes imply. Let him proceed farther along this road and he reaches the ecstatic exaltation of the mystic, which on examination proves to contain elements of a concrete, or even of a sensuous kind. So the circle is complete. The endeavor to avoid the limitations of thought ends in an acceptance of the limitations of sense. "Spiritual intuition" turns out dependent on concrete imagery. The exaggeration of ideal thinking has concealed not exorcised the moment of cognition; nay, rather, it has brought back the latter in its lowest form.[1]

In accuracy as in depth, however, the first analysis of faith is inferior to the second, which defines it as an instrument of assent, conviction, assurance of truth, or as such assurance itself. Faith so construed is marked by two characteristics: it bases its conclusions on practical rather than theoretical

[1] Cf. A. Seth, *loc. cit.*

grounds, and it deals especially with principles which are incapable of demonstration. In view of the second of these two characteristics, faith may be compared to "belief" in one of its chief meanings, although it must at once be added that both terms are used in highly ambiguous ways. Belief in this sense has been succinctly described in one of the most recent of English dictionaries as conviction based upon grounds insufficient for positive knowledge. The same essential idea has often been expressed by the classical writers, perhaps by none more clearly than by Locke, whose quaint phraseology deserves to be quoted: "Belief, assent, or opinion . . . is the admitting or receiving any proposition for true, upon arguments or proofs that are found to persuade us to receive it as true, without certain knowledge that it is so." [1]

The psychological conception of belief is not coincident with this. The psychologist investigates it primarily as a fact or phenomenon of consciousness, without regard to the value of the evidence on which it may depend. Considering it from the strictly scientific point of view, he looks on it as an attitude of mind with reference to conscious contents, or if a definition of the term in its proper

[1] *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, IV., XV. 3.

psychological meaning may be ventured, as acceptance, as the recognition of thought-contents as real and of judgments or propositions as valid or true. In the study of this phase of mental life, psychology has begun a good work which it should be encouraged to prosecute farther. In particular, as modern psychological investigation broadens and matures, more precise conclusions may be expected concerning the laws which determine the influence of feeling and will in the genesis of the believing attitude. When this result shall have been accomplished, the philosopher and the theologian will be placed in a position of advantage, because in larger measure than at present they will be provided with the data necessary for their own inquiries.

Nevertheless, the problem for these latter thinkers will remain distinct from the psychological question. The issue for them concerns not so much the nature of belief as a mental process as the grounds upon which assent may legitimately be based. Often, as has just been noted, it is the question of conviction in cases where theoretical demonstration is excluded and the decision must be made, if a decision is reached at all, upon evidence confessedly incomplete. Moderately and broadly stated, the thesis of the faith-philosophy in relation to principles which are dependent on support of this kind runs

as follows: ideal impulses, man's practical instincts, the spiritual nature, constitute a source of evidence over and above the witness of pure theoretical intelligence, and under certain conditions their deliverances possess paramount authority.

In his advocacy of such conclusions, the faith-philosopher of to-day enjoys several advantages over his predecessor of earlier times. To begin with, it is open to him to appeal to the historical recurrence of the principle which he defends in proof that it is grounded in fundamental tendencies of human nature, which will not be denied their rights. When the head fails to satisfy the aspirations of the spirit, the heart takes up the work which the intellect has laid down; and this, its habitual refusal to accept sentence of rejection passed upon its claims, its recurrent tendency to substitute itself for the understanding, in happier seasons as in the normal condition of affairs its friend and ally, attests its title to consideration as an ultimate and legitimate factor in the genesis of opinion. Now, it behooves the historian not to be a partisan. But it is also incumbent on him, as much as in him lies, to point out the bearing of historical phenomena upon the issues which are at stake. Therefore, it may be remarked at this point that it is difficult to escape the impression which is

made by the frequency and the intensity of conviction with which the appeal to faith has been commended by many different thinkers at critical stages of the world's development. France and Germany and Britain and America: Rousseau and Jacobi; Kant and Ritschl; Hamilton, Romanes, James; Tennyson and Browning: the philosophy of feeling and the *Glaubensphilosophie;* the philosophy of duty which in the opening nineteenth century rang like a clarion throughout the Teutonic world, and the philosophy of religion which as that century drew toward its close sought to rescue faith without neglecting the results of modern critical inquiry; the religious philosophy of the spiritually-minded empiricists and of the artist-poets — judgment, indeed, is not to be abandoned in favor of authority, but it is equally uncritical to reject out of hand a movement so persistent as this, and one which is developed under such leadership. The presumption rather holds that it is more than mere reaction, more than a forlorn attempt to save ideal positions which have been undermined by the advance of rational investigation. *A priori* it may be expected also to represent a deeply grounded tendency of reflection, itself in part produced by the march of intellectual progress.

On closer examination the justness of this con-

clusion becomes more evident. In particular, it is well borne out by the history of opinion during the century which has just ended. In this period few things have been more remarkable than the development of two contrasted yet related views concerning the principles of practical life. On the one hand, the foundations of ethics and religion have been subjected to the severest scrutiny, and harassing doubts have been raised concerning their stability; on the other, the progress of science as well as of speculation has yielded increasing evidence that morals and faith are indestructible factors in human nature and in man's development. Psychology has shown that the religious sentiment is a normal element in mental life. Anthropology, the new science of religion with its strictly empirical and "positive" inquiries, the objective historical study of the various religious systems — these have confirmed the verdict which the more limited researches of the psychologist supplies. The investigation of the problems of society, so characteristic of the mental habit of the time, has not only emphasized the truth that morality is an indispensable condition of social existence, but at the same time that it has been engaged in throwing new light on this venerable truth, it has brought into relief the position of religion as a fundamental

element in social culture. Of late even the evolutionary theory — an ally for an enemy indeed — has been invoked to prove the eternal and indestructible validity of spiritual principles.[1]

In consequence of this advance in the appreciation of ideal principles, their defence is less difficult now than in other eras of transition which have preceded the present age. The contemptuous rejection of religion, or of the established views of ethical truth, has become impossible for the instructed and careful thinker. It remains open to him still, if he will or if he must, to come to negative conclusions concerning the validity of spiritual principles, especially of those which constitute the content of religious belief; but take them into account he must, or his theory of things will be condemned from the outset, since it fails to consider phenomena which are recognized by the great majority of capable inquirers to be among the things which it is essential to explain. It is true that a number of contemporary thinkers continue to look upon ideal conviction as a mere by-product of the natural and social machine. But the influence of this type of thought is waning,

[1] Cf., *e.g.*, the works by Fiske which have been referred to above, especially *Through Nature to God*, pp. 131–194; also, chap. III., pp. 114–131, chap. IV., pp. 157–184, and chap. VII., pp. 323–328, of the present treatise.

and its advocates are losing touch with the deeper movements of their own time. These agree in ascribing fundamental significance to the spiritual phases of life, however divergent the explanations may be which are suggested for them. In this way the discussion has been raised to a higher plane. The question for man of science and philosopher alike is no longer whether the ideal side of things merits investigation, but which is the correct view of it to take. For it has been established that in its inherent meaning — whatever that may be determined to be — it possesses a fundamental, a distinctive, a permanent importance.

This result, however, will not satisfy those who make their appeal to faith. It is incumbent on them to go farther and make larger claims. They are bound to maintain not only that the ideal side of human nature and human life deserves to be considered in any attempted explanation of the world, but that in and of itself it throws light upon the questions to which it gives rise. This, as has been already suggested,[1] is the essence of the doctrine under consideration. The faith principle may be stated in various ways, and, as will shortly be argued, it stands in need of careful limitation if it is to be successfully employed.

[1] Cf. above, pp. 251–252.

But so much is indispensable to it at the lowest terms. Spiritual aspiration, it must assume, and in general the ideal nature, have a title to be heard in the determination of issues which fall within their proper sphere, for they are trustworthy witnesses to the credibility of their own postulates. Not only as a matter of fact do they influence decision amid the interplay of idea and motive, but of right they ought to be permitted to exercise this function, since in themselves they possess an evidential value. Other and more pretentious formulations of the faith-philosophy are of minor importance. That immediate consciousness is always to be preferred to mediate reflection; that instinct is superior to reason; that the understanding errs, while conscience is infallible; that unregulated feeling is of supreme authority; that thought must give place to "vision"; that practical consequences constitute the only criteria of truth — when the position is stated in such wise, it should not be a matter of surprise that it encounters contemptuous rejection on the part of thoughtful men. But that the æsthetic, the ethical, and the religious consciousness are normal and integral elements in human nature, and that thus their deliverances themselves are evidential — principles of this kind form the real kernel of the

doctrine, and these, or if they have here been stated badly, the spirit which inspires them and the conclusions to which it legitimately leads are capable of rational defence.

In support of the former of these conclusions the argument has been sufficiently developed. It remains to note that, if its validity be granted, it bears in favor of the second and critical phase of the doctrine. For if the ideal nature is an integral element in man, if its existence in the individual, as a factor in social organization, and as a result of evolution, points to its fundamental importance, it becomes difficult to maintain that it is to be refused all credence when it comes forward as a witness in its own concerns. The criticism which is designed to discredit it starts from an analysis that is believed to show its incompetency to give testimony, even in regard to matters specifically ideal. These objections will demand attention anon. Meanwhile, it may be remarked that, whatever difficulties they may reveal, a careful, not to say an impartial analysis of the spiritual functions brings certain other factors into view which contribute to the support of the principal argument. It is often assumed that the faith-philosophy makes its appeal to feeling merely — that the will to believe, as it is sometimes put

by the opponents of the doctrine, is the wish to believe or the demand to believe, or to state the matter in another way, it is a decision to give free play to the imagination under the influence of emotional bias. And it cannot be denied that many who accept the principle have stated it in forms which give fair ground for this interpretation. But provided we have succeeded in grasping its true meaning, in essence it is not exposed to such attacks. For the acceptance of the testimony of the spiritual nature in regard to the questions of the inner life is not the same as submission to the chance promptings of feeling and desire, and the following of their guidance, whithersoever it may lead. Faith includes elements of knowledge as well as of feeling and will. And the forms of emotion and volition — fused with elements distinctly cognitive — which are cited in defence of positive belief, are definite developments of these functions, directed to the appreciation and the realization of the highest ideal ends. Here the argument from the substantive position of the spiritual nature in man merges into the later doctrine — if indeed it be so new as we are wont to think it — of worth or values. It is not because conscience and the religious sentiment are composed in large degree of non-cognitive elements

that they merit a respectful hearing, but because, each in its own way, they propose ideals of transcendent significance.

An example will make this clearer. Take, for instance, the question which for all thinking minds pushes itself into the foreground of the discussion, the question of belief in the moral order of the world.[1] Why have men from ages out of mind believed that the world-order, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, is at bottom in harmony with the ethical laws which conscience bids them follow in the governance of their own infinitesimal lives? And how comes it that still in this age, despite the tremendous increment of power which the materialistic and pessimistic theories of the universe have gained, they still hold to this first postulate of the moral life? The answer in the last analysis is implied in the concluding words of the question. Other reasons move us, but amid the stress and storm of doubt, we cling to belief in a moral order, we find it impossible to yield up our faith, because the abandonment of it would mean the bankruptcy of the spirit, the despiritualization of the world. The conclusion here has sometimes been called the result of choice. But for one the writer would deprecate

[1] Cf. James, *The Will to Believe*, pp. 51–62, 103 ff.

the use of the term in this connection. In one aspect of the matter, it is true, the element of free decision is so vitally involved that thanks are due to those who have emphasized man's responsibility for the conclusions which he adopts concerning the ultimate spiritual issues. But it is decision under the guidance of the deepest moral convictions and the loftiest spiritual ideals that we possess. The alternative is not one of mere desire. Nor is it a merely theoretical issue between principles for which the evidence is in the balance. The question at stake is indeed a question of evidence — this it is essential always to keep in mind — but of evidence concerning things of fundamental worth. And this their meaning for the human spirit, their significance in human life and history, itself is evidence.

A further illustration of the principle is furnished by belief in God. The grounds of theistic belief are numerous and varied; the complete argument for theism is cumulative, composed of many convergent lines of proof.[1] To different minds the several elements which compose it appeal in different ways and with varying degrees of force. Not

[1] In particular, the theoretical arguments are not to be neglected, as has too often been done in later modern times. Even when the rights of the practical reason are being defended, the "consilience of the proofs" is to be kept in mind.

least important, however, and far from least in its coercive influence over the modern mind, is the conviction of the supreme significance of the theistic postulate. The universe at large may be dead and soulless. As the sceptics have so often told us, the response we think we find therein to the noblest aspirations of our spiritual nature may be nothing but the shadows of man's own reflection projected out into the untenanted void. The instinctive disposition of the human spirit to crown its feeling and its action, as it completes its thinking, by belief in a Supreme Spiritual Being, may be a delusive impulse rather than a mental tendency which is worthy of all trust.[1] But these convictions and the ideal appreciation of their object, these strivings toward the assurance that God exists and reigns, themselves constitute a principal obstacle to the successful defence of the sceptical position. And if it should be charged that the theism which is thus reached results from yielding to desire against the dictates of reason, the reply is to be framed on somewhat the same lines as Rousseau's criticism of the selfish analysis of morals proposed by Helvétius:[2] the opponents of theism carry the refutation of the

[1] Cf. chap. III., pp. 116–122.

[2] Cf. Falckenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 251.

cavil in their own breasts, if they will but analyze the promptings of belief which they have been crushing back in deference to what they consider the demands of rational thought. Or to employ the more accurate because more simple and spontaneous words of St. Augustine, God has made us for Himself, and our heart is restless till it finds its rest in Him.[1]

But this is obscurantism, it will be urged, an abandonment of reason in favor of lawless conviction. It implies a return to lower and less developed forms of culture, under the pretence that they contain elements of truth which later reflection has overlooked. Such is the criticism which the appeal to faith perennially calls forth from its opponents. As the historical study of the doctrine emphasizes its recurrent appearance, especially in the more recent periods of modern thinking, so it would be easy to construct a catena of citations illustrating the development of these objections on the part of the defenders of the rationalistic thesis. Jacobi, who formulated the principle in a blundering, not to say an unworthy way, was especially unfortunate in drawing the fire of his antagonists. From Lessing to Hegel, many of his contemporaries overwhelmed his views with criticism, often not

[1] *Confessions*, I. 1.

unmingled with scorn. So Kant, in his review of the controversy between Mendelssohn and Jacobi, advocates his own doctrine of "faith from a need of reason," and, protesting alike against the exaggerations of dogmatic rational theology and the faith which discards reason, breaks out at the close in a passage which, apart from its context, might well be made the watchword of the pure intellectualists: —

"Friends of the human race and of that which is most sacred to man! Accept what after careful and sincere examination seems to you most worthy of belief, whether it be facts or rational principles, — only do not deprive reason of that which makes her the supreme earthly good, namely her prerogative to be the ultimate criterion of truth. . . ."[1]

Again, to come at once to the present age, James has quoted similar objections from the critics of the later and more moderate statements of the principle. Referring to the fundamental assumption of empirical science, the uniformity of nature, he remarks: —

"With regard to all other possible truths, however, a number of our most influential contemporaries think that an attitude of faith is not only

[1] "Was heisst: sich im Denken orientiren?" *Werke* (Hartenstein, 2d ed.), vol. IV., p. 352.

illogical but shameful. Faith in a religious dogma for which there is no outward proof, but which we are tempted to postulate for our emotional interests, just as we postulate the uniformity of nature for our intellectual interests, is branded by Professor Huxley 'as the lowest depth of immorality' . . . Professor Clifford calls 'it guilt and sin' to believe even the truth without 'scientific evidence.'"[1]

But it was reserved for one of Professor James's pupils and friends to put the attack on the faith-philosophy in its most trenchant form. Doctor Miller is convinced "that such precepts are in effect an attempt to corrupt intelligence, that they aim a deadly blow at the vital instincts of the upright intellect." And again, "The Will to Believe is the will to deceive — to deceive one's self; and the deception, which begins at home, may be expected in due course to pass on to others . . . "; and, to make but one more citation, its advocate "incites us to take refuge in scarlet sins (as timorous logicians fancy them) of imaginative faith."[2]

The overstatements involved in these criticisms may safely be disregarded. In essence, however, they are of importance, since they give expression

[1] *The Will to Believe*, pp. 91–92; cf. also, pp. 7–8, 129 ff.

[2] Dickinson S. Miller, "'The Will to Believe' and the Duty to Doubt," *International Journal of Ethics*, January, 1899, pp. 172, 173, 177.

to the principle fundamentally in dispute between the parties to the debate: the issue, as the rationalist describes it, between reason and unreason, or as it is phrased by his opponent, between a barren intellectualism and the due recognition of spiritual faith.

The controversy is of further moment because it brings to a point the ultimate questions concerning the nature, the grounds, and the criteria of faith. To the first of these more than one reference has already been made, with especial consideration of the matter or content of the faith-function.

A second phase of the same question, and one which raises issues of peculiar difficulty, relates more directly to the form than to the content of faith. Granted that faith has a substantive value, what is the form or character of the mental processes involved? Is the judgment of appraisement the outcome of discursive thinking, or is it essentially and always, as so many of the faith-philosophers have contended, direct, immediate, intuitive? Now, few students of the philosophical sciences in their later developments would hesitate to solve this problem by rejecting the disjunction which is implied in the statement of the issue. For it is not so much a case of either-or as of complexity and combination. On the one hand, there

is the immediate judgment of conviction, the intuitive apprehension of worth or values, and the believing attitude which ensues when the mind — "heart and head," thought, feeling, will, in one — accepts the decision rendered. This is the leap of faith to its mark, the living experience of truth, so much commended by the poets as well as the philosophers of the school. And his must be a dull spirit who does not kindle into fervor when the verities of the ages stand forth before the vision of the soul, framed as in a noontide splendor, or when the saints of earth depict in glowing words their assured conviction of supernal truth.

Nor is such intuitive belief without a real value. As a constituent factor in the ideal apprehension of spiritual truth, if it should not rather be termed a distinctive type of ideal conviction, it possesses an inherent validity not to be discredited by the severest rational criticism. In eras of doubt, moreover, this form of belief gains additional significance. In it the spirit of the time finds ready for its work an instrument of assent which depends, or at least appears to depend, on no prolonged process of ratiocination. The individual is baffled, the age hesitant or cynic, because neither can plainly discover truth. In order to effective living and in order to mental peace, there is need for an author-

ity which, speaking with directness as with power, shall bring the inner conflict to a close. But purity of heart and clearness of spiritual perception may remain unimpaired by the failure of speculative thinking to reach a settled decision concerning the questions of belief. Then the immediacy with which faith at times renders its verdict in ideal causes becomes of moment for the individual and for society, as well as the evidence which it supplies over and above the testimony of pure theoretical thought. By its immediate judgment of ideal values it ends the long-continued balancing of arguments and counter-arguments which seem to lead nowhither. The positive conclusions which it impresses upon the believing mind steady the spirit to take up with new courage the work of life. The age as a whole is checked in its negation, as now one now other of the leaders, moved himself by inborn spiritual aspiration, guides it along the way of a return to faith.[1]

Relatively, therefore, this exercise of the faith-function is legitimate. In and of itself it has an inherent validity. In eras of transition it renders special service because of its peculiar adaptation to the needs of the time. But these, its high qualities and value easily lend themselves to misinterpreta-

[1] Cf. chap. I., pp. 41–42.

tion. The means of help for burdened souls which faith supplies, comes to be vaunted as a source of certain insight into matters of a spiritual kind. The immediacy of ideal belief is held to raise it above the vicissitudes, as above all the lingering delays, of reasoned investigation, until it is construed as a supreme spiritual faculty which makes men altogether independent of the processes of discursive thinking when they attack the ultimate problems of the mind. It is obvious, however, that these conclusions greatly overstate the truth. As a fact of mere analysis, the immediate forms of conviction rarely if ever exhaust the components of the mental state which is termed faith. Even in cases in which the presence of mediate elements is not at once discernible, reflection will lay bare the origin through process of much that appears to be direct. How varied are the impulses, for example, which together make up the springs of faith in any one of the fundamental articles of religion. Is it belief in God, is it belief in life beyond the grave, or in human responsibility for conduct, or a divine governance of this world as of the next — who can say in regard to any given man how much of heredity and training, how much of experience and reflection, how much of the reasoning which all men do upon the

great outstanding problems of life and existence, how much in short of discursive process, proximate or remote, and how much of unmediated ideal apprehension have entered into the resultant personal conviction? In fact, one thing in regard to the whole matter, and one only, is entirely clear: the instances of pure intuitive faith must be infrequent, if they occur at all; in the common case faith includes causes, reasons, motives of many and divers kinds.

But here as before the question of validity is more important than the question of analysis, and the answer to it more decisive. For it is evident that the appeal to the immediacy of faith, rather than to faith itself, mistakes the meaning of the doctrine as a whole. The value of directness in the judgment of belief is incidental rather than essential, however great in any given circumstances it may prove to be. In the long run the significance of faith depends, as its truth does always, upon its ideality, not upon its abridgment of the consciousness which constitutes conviction or which issues therein. The faith-philosophers, therefore, who commend unreflective assent to positive principles as the sure key to the riddles of the world and human life, overlook the real strength of their own position in their concern to give it the greatest practical

effect. In order to aid their fellows or assist their age, they emphasize the part instead of the whole; they risk the permanent that they may satisfy present and pressing need.

Thus the discussion of the first of the final problems which were proposed on page 266, the nature of faith, leads to a consideration of the second also, the grounds of faith. The same subject has been further considered in the earlier portions of the argument, and it will be involved once more in the answer to the third question, which concerns the criteria, standards, or tests of faith. To this, therefore, attention may at once be directed.

The question of the criteria of faith includes the question of the limits within which it may legitimately be employed, and both suggest the problem which is perhaps the most critical of the whole discussion, How can faith be guarded against the danger of degenerating into caprice? Tastes proverbially differ, and those forms of mental life which are most colored by emotion and will are also most exposed to the influence of subjective bias, no matter how fully they express, or rather in part just because they express, the deepest impulses of the personal life. Even moral judgments, to which the judgments of faith may most appositely be compared, vary in individuals and classes,

with personal, national, and racial circumstance, in consequence of inheritance, training, experience, or the chance vicissitudes of daily life. How, then, is faith to escape becoming the sport of prejudice and passion? Is the Protestant Christian to put implicit trust in the deliverances of his spiritual nature? and the Catholic? and the Jew? And if so, by what right can the same privilege be denied to the Mohammedan, or the Hindu, or to any spiritually minded pagan, not now to speak of the conscientious secularist or atheist, let alone the religionists of the barbarian or savage races? At this point the advocates of the faith-philosophy are caught in a dilemma. Instead of yielding results absolutely certain, the instrument of conviction to which they appeal is found to be peculiarly liable to error, unless criteria can be provided which shall make it possible to distinguish between its legitimate and its illegitimate use. Either "faith" is mere credence, or its grounds and its criteria must be set forth.

To this problem many of the "faith-philosophers" have consciously, or half-unconscious of the import of their work, addressed their thought; with results which are fitted to throw light upon the question, although there are points which still continue in need of elucidation. In the first place,

it is plain that the area within which ideal belief is legitimate is limited by certain general principles, which are in part connected with the character of belief at large, in part depend upon the progress of positive knowledge. The evidence of faith may not be pleaded in behalf of principles whose character is purely theoretical,[1] nor may it be cited in contravention of conclusions which are based upon proofs of demonstrative force. Questions of pure science, for example, are by general consent excluded from the list of those to which faith may be held to apply; even the scientific accuracy or inaccuracy of Holy Scripture has ceased to be a subject of concern, except to a few theologians of the extreme conservative school. And it will not be seriously argued that faith has cogency sufficient to overthrow principles for which the evidence of knowledge is complete. The attempt has often been made — erroneously, however, in the opinion of the writer[2]

[1] Unless, as is done by certain enthusiasts, the scope of the faith doctrine is extended to cover fundamental speculative as well as fundamental practical problems. This view, however, has been rejected by more cautious thinkers, especially in later times. The same is true of the widely held opinion that "faith" is the equivalent in the sphere of practical consciousness of *a priori* reason in the intellectual sphere, and that its deliverances stand on the same level with theoretical axioms. On both these questions compare Lotze, *Mikrokosmus* (3d ed.), vol. III., pp. 549–553, although his discussion is not to be commended in all respects.

[2] Cf. above, pp. 247–248.

— to show that the spiritual problems, or the most of them, are entirely inaccessible to speculative intelligence; and it may be reasonably questioned whether a case is ever finally closed in regard to which faith, when it has been freed from disturbing bias, tested by critical standards, and so found to voice not the chance promptings of individual minds but a deep spiritual conviction of the human heart, still testifies in a positive sense in the face of grave theoretical objections. But when rational thought has rendered a deliberate, a complete, a final decision concerning matters which lie within its province, the spirit in the end must also conform. The ideal nature is a competent witness only when its own interests are in question, and even then its testimony is limited by the established results of thought.

Here the inquiry leads on difficult ground. As a matter of abstract logic, the criteria or canons of faith which have been suggested are plain: when the attempt is made to apply them in practice, grave perplexities at once arise. For neither of the rules discussed is of such a kind as to admit precise objective definition. Some questions are theoretical and not ideal beyond the peradventure of a doubt, others pertain to the æsthetic, the ethical, or the religious consciousness without impinging

upon matters of theoretical proof. But what of those cases in which the very sting of doubt is caused by the mingling of data originally neutral and spiritual implications in one and the same crucial problem? The general principle is clear, the application of it is beset by an acute form of the difficulty which commonly embarrasses the concrete use of abstract standards, the difficulty of adjusting them with precision to particular cases. Again, who shall decide when a principle or system is so definitely established that it must not be believed, however strong the impulses of the heart may be? Matters of demonstration are of course excluded. But on any strict analysis these must be reckoned few; and just as he who assents to such conclusions only as are demonstratively proven will find his stock of accepted principles shrinking to a scanty store, so, on the other hand, the faith-philosopher who holds it allowable, at the behest of the spiritual man, to believe any doctrine not unquestionably false, reserves for himself a wide range of doubtful positions about which his thought may roam. For it is indispensable to take into account the force of rational probability as well as the evidence of demonstration; and both must be considered in relation to intellectual progress, and in the light of its results. The great body of prin-

ciples, scientific, historical, social, philosophical, as well as ethical and religious, which make up what is termed the modern view of the world, is for the most part composed of conclusions of a probable, or highly probable, kind rather than of positions demonstrated beyond the possibility of doubt. But it cannot be maintained that faith has a right to accept or reject these at will, even though in certain cases it finds itself pressed by the consequences to which they lead. Such a course of procedure on its part would justify the extreme criticisms of its opponents, for it would be irrationalism in a naked form.

This necessity for bringing faith into correlation with other forms of culture has gained wide-spread recognition. The criteria to which it points, however, are external and incomplete. Inquiry has therefore more than once been made for canons of belief immediately dependent on the spiritual nature of man, or which issue from this in its co-working with the other functions of the mind. The form which such inquiries have taken may in a general way be described as an endeavor to deduce the believable principles of ethics and religion from the nature of ideal consciousness or to formulate them as the normal outcome of its exercise discovered by painstaking analysis.

The most conservative attempt of this kind was made by Kant.[1] The pure reason, Kant argued, culminates in Ideas — the soul and its immortal destiny, freedom in contrast to the mechanical causality of the phenomenal world, God as the Supreme Being back of self and world alike — for which it can produce no adequate proof. But reason in its practical functioning finds warrant for ascribing reality to these, though only in the practical sense. Freedom is implicated in the *a priori* and unconditional legislation of conscience; immortality and God are also necessary postulates, if the demands of the practical reason that perfect holiness be attained and that character receive its due reward are to be satisfied. The fundamental principles of ethics and religion, then, may with confidence be made matters of conviction. They are incapable of theoretical demonstration, but they are legitimate objects of "moral faith."

Considered broadly, the Kantian view forms the most firmly consolidated theory of practical faith which has ever been proposed. How imposing, even impregnable, it seems. Here is no room left for belief at random, no yielding to impulse or

[1] *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (the "Dialektik"; and the "Methodenlehre," Hpstk. I., §§ 2–3, Hpstk. II.); *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft; Kritik der Urtheilskraft*, especially the "Methodenlehre der teleologischen Urtheilskraft."

chance desire. Man, guided always by reason, gains a creed whose articles correspond to the supreme endeavors of speculative intelligence at the same time that they give expression to the minimum of truth in default of which his ethical life becomes no better than a delusion. And yet it would be difficult to meet the objection that the high promise of the Kantian analysis is only partially fulfilled. At very least, it is evident that the religious consciousness suffers because of the position assigned to it by the critique of reason. Not only in the outcome of the inquiry, as in Kant's own sympathy, is religion construed as a corollary to ethics rather than as an independent interest, but the mode of its defence brings it into subordination to the argument in behalf of *a priori* morals. Freedom is made the indispensable condition of morality and altogether essential to the validity of the moral law. Immortality and God are also postulated, but the argument by which their assumption is justified is less direct than the defence of freedom — being based on an interpretation of the moral consciousness with regard to the *summum bonum* which in itself is not beyond the possibility of challenge, and the successive deductions from which, in spite of their influence on subsequent theories of religion and morals, may

fairly be said to possess a progressively diminishing force.[1]

A complete discussion of the causes which led to this comparative neglect of one entire aspect of the spiritual life would transcend the limits of the present inquiry. It may be remarked, however, that Kant's initial error consisted in his failure to realize the relative independence of religion, and that a safeguard against the misconception lay to hand in a due appreciation of the significance of religious principles considered from the standpoint of worth or values. And this suggests a further question which cannot be argued here, although it is more doubtful than the first,[2] the question whether in general Kant did not underestimate the moment of worth or meaning, in his concern to frame a practical system which, like his theoretical philosophy, should be grounded in reason only. The extraordinary merit of the Kantian theory it would be idle to deny. And not the least important phase of its influence has been the part it has

[1] In particular, the argument for immortality is but one of the several possible arguments, even if it be accepted without criticism at its face value; while the argument for God postulates his existence as a completely transcendent Being, working from without to bring the natural and the moral order into ultimate accord.

[2] Because of the elements in the Kantian doctrine which look in an opposite direction, *e.g.*, the insistence on the supreme meaning of moral personality and the good will.

played in the change from the abstract intellectualism of earlier modern thinking to the more comprehensive views of later times. But it has also the defects of its qualities. Hence it becomes at least a defensible conclusion, that Kant's insistence that faith in every case should be a faith of reason, and reason in its *a priori* form, detracted from his full recognition of faith's ideal nature.

A second form of the attempt to determine the canons and the objects of faith diverges from the Kantian theory, but may be treated under the same general head. A summary by Fiske will serve to illustrate the type, although it was framed for another purpose and in support of a different philosophy of belief: —

"Now in all ages and in every form of Religion, the theory has comprised three essential elements: first, belief in Deity, as quasi-human; secondly, belief in an Unseen World in which human beings continue to exist after death; thirdly, recognition of the ethical aspects of human life as related in a special and intimate sense to this Unseen World. These three elements are alike indispensable. If any one of the three be taken away, the remnant cannot properly be called Religion."[1]

In faith-philosophies of the type which is illus-

[1] *Through Nature to God*, pp. 174–175.

trated by this statement positions fundamental to the system of Kant are lacking. The appeal here is to the naturalness of faith, not to its basis in *a priori* morals. Certain principles of ethics and certain elements of religious truth are described as the constituent factors in the ideal consciousness, and therefore entitled to be received on the evidence of faith. They are the essential elements in all systems of belief, as some thinkers tend to put the argument, or they are the result to which morals and faith reduce, when, under the guidance of enlightened opinion, they are freed alike from the burden of early superstitions and the dogmatic overgrowth of later forms of culture. As indispensable to the integrity of the ideal nature, therefore, and as the normal products of its activity, they and they alone can lay claim to the benefits of its support. Less than these faith cannot accept without self-negation; to assent to more is to open the door to imaginative dreaming.

In view of the preceding discussion, a few additional remarks will suffice to define the issue in regard to this second formulation of the faith doctrine. Of great value in itself and strongly grounded, it yet lies open to objection if the claims which it sets up are taken in the full literal sense. For it would require a broad interpretation of

immortality and responsibility and God to make them the sole essential factors in all the various forms of religious theory which are, or which have been, current among men. And provided the list of credible doctrines is viewed as a matter of strict proof, it is not evident how the critic is to be confuted should he emphasize the relation of the subject to the facts of religious evolution. If it is difficult to prove the universal prevalence of the principles in question in the present and the past, what warrant can be shown, warrant that is of an unimpeachable kind, for expecting their continued preëminence in the course of future development? Nor will the reference to enlightened opinion adequately relieve the situation. It is a matter of record that enlightenment itself is a relative term; and the orthodoxy of progress or of negation, like the orthodoxy of traditional belief, is apt with considerable exactness to coincide with the conclusions which given schools or thinkers themselves have reached. Least of all, it would seem as a matter of consistency, ought enlightened opinion to be appealed to as an unalterable standard by those whose own views incline them toward affiliation with the radical wing.

Again, as in regard to the Kantian theory, it is not contended that the view under discussion is

devoid of force. On the contrary, it represents in the opinion of the writer a phase of thought on which, when it is properly guarded, the faith-philosophy may well rely. At this late stage of the inquiry, it hardly needs to be repeated that one most cogent ground for the legitimacy of the appeal to faith is furnished by the central position of the ideal faculties in the organism of the mind;[1] so also the deliverances of the spirit, when they can be shown to be fundamental, enjoy a title than which none is clearer to the trust that is to be put in the spiritual nature as a whole. But they merit this acceptance only when their position is defined; and this determination is itself a matter of judgment. The fact, indeed, does not reduce the meaning of the argument to a nullity. It does suggest the necessity for employing every form of procedure possible, no one being favored to the rejection of the rest. In particular, it makes it advisable to supplement the method of defining the sphere of faith through an analysis of the spiritual nature by some method which shall take into more direct account the character of the objects presented for belief.

Thus, in the third place, the discussion returns to the domain of values. Comparison with the

[1] Cf. above, pp. 253 ff.

conditions of belief in general fixes the limits of the credible. Analysis of the ideal consciousness and of the outcome of its working controls the subjectivity of individual opinion by ascertaining the doctrines which are fundamental to practical reason or reached in the normal course of its development. The judgment of appreciation, although it is more exposed than these to the dangers of un-rationalized conviction, includes two elements of great importance: it springs from the exercise of ideal faith in its most unmixed form; and it considers primarily the objects rather than the subject of faith. As a credible hypothesis — credible, that is, when it is tested by the conditions required of all propositions which on any grounds may be received as true — stands higher or lower in the scale of meaning, of significance, or, finally, since there is no other phrase which so precisely expresses the idea, in the scale of ideal worth, to this degree it has a title to acceptance.

The difficulty here will be to establish such a scheme of values. For, unfortunately, the method of faith which starts from the consideration of the objects of faith does not guarantee the exclusion of subjective factors from the judging process. Rather, as suggested, its purity as faith, its very freedom from extrinsic elements, raises the question of

criteria again in an acute form. Advantage must therefore be taken of all manifestations of the faith-function which show an organic development, or point to the existence or the formation of categories of ideal thinking, or admit of comparison with other criteria, preferably themselves ideal, which are already recognized as sound. The concurrence of opinion among men or among larger or smaller sections of mankind, the harmony of new conclusions or principles under examination with established ethical laws, the evidence of ideal meaning supplied by work accomplished in individual souls, in the life of society, its organic evolution, or its recorded history — facts and inferences like these will supplement the more direct and immediate judgments of value in the establishment of reliable standards of ideal truth.

Tested in these various ways, all the several methods being jointly used, faith attains its maximum of rational foundation. Knowledge in the complete sense it cannot be, although it contains elements of knowing. Nor is it allowable to rank its deliverances equivalent to the regularly formed and fully attested conclusions of pure theoretical intelligence. Nevertheless its testimony is of moment. If the position of an ideal principle in the scale of values is supreme, if it represents one

of those chiefest aspirations of the human spirit which at one and the same time possess the greatest intrinsic significance and agree with the analytic examination of the spiritual functions, then faith rises, and rises legitimately, to a high level of confident assent. And short of this, if a principle stands high according to the criteria of ideal worth, if moreover it is congruous with the results of theoretical thought, in so far forth it has an evidential meaning which deserves consideration and respect. When, on the contrary, one or other of these elements in the groundwork of faith is absent or imperfect, the degree of legitimate assurance is diminished, although the presence of some in a perfect form may in measure compensate for the partial failure of the rest.

CHAPTER VII

THE CLOSE OF TRANSITIONAL ERAS

THE thesis which is implied in the title of this chapter will not be acceptable to the advocates of negative views. In their judgment it conceals a fallacy, or at least it is open to suspicion pointing in the direction of an unwarrantable assumption. According to the sceptic's creed, if he may be said to have a creed, the critical elements in thought which constitute the motive forces in eras of transition never find their term. Their influence, like their existence, is perennial. Periods of constructive thinking, on the other hand, the eras in which man, blinded by his ignorance or led on by his inborn tendency to seek for final explanations of the world, builds up great systems of belief, are the less normal stages of intellectual development, and positive conclusions, not destructive views, the factors which hinder the progress of opinion.

By the extremists these conclusions are applied to the method of thought as well as to its content. Not merely the results of positive speculation, but

the spirit which animates it, and the mode of its exercise, must be rejected, if the mind is to gain its normal poise. Metaphysical systems and theological dogmas are cumbrous growths which need once for all to be cleared away, in order that thought may give itself to the work which modern progress has shown to be suited to its capacity. These unhealthy products of the theoretical intellect destroyed, the oppressive forms of government to which they have given power, and the selfish principles of conduct which in the past have been associated with them, will also disappear. No longer engrossed in vain attempts to solve the problems of the world beyond, men will have strength to carry forward the investigation of the world in which their present lot is cast. When belief in God has been broken down by the proof that there is no warrant in reason for assuming his existence, kings will abandon their claim to rule by virtue of a divine commission and nobles cease to support aristocratic institutions by alliances with the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The disintegration of dogmatic beliefs and political institutions of the absolute type will hasten the disappearance of oppressive ethical forms; class distinctions will be recognized for what they are, incidental results of early social development surviving in the modern

state, not God-appointed lines of cleavage between man and man; the practice of altruism will increase with the sense of human equality; a more equitable distribution of the goods of life will be promoted by the recognition of the inherent worth of man apart from the circumstances of birth and station; abandoning the ethics based on an attempt to please a far-off Deity, mankind will find its true vocation in adjusting conduct to the conditions of its earthly environment, and the individual spiritual enlargement in furthering the welfare of his fellows.

A large part of later modern thought betrays the influence of this vision of destruction. In order to the realization of their dream, our agnostics rightly judge that there will be need for a long continuance of negative reflection. The institutions of the past and the "traditions" on which they are founded cannot be broken down by the effort of a day, or even by the active work of a few generations of critical thinkers. Still less is it possible without prolonged exertion to root out of the popular consciousness the principles which have come down to it by the inheritance of race and stock and nation, of political and social tendency, of ethical and religious spirit. If, finally, the systems of thought and life thus to be dis-

carded are to have no successors, if their disappearance is to leave their places void, except in so far as they are filled by views which relate to the present and the phenomenal world alone, the sceptical mood must needs become the dominant habit of mankind. Provided the agnostic theory of things be true, doubt is in sober earnest the normal condition of intelligence. At least until men shall have lost their primitive instinct to meditate on the questions which concern them most, the only healthy mind is that which functions by denial.

It commonly escapes the notice of the sceptic that adhesion to this position brings him into touch with the class of thinkers from which in principle he intends to differ. For it is evident that there is little to choose between the convinced doubter and the dogmatist of the usual positive type. The former contends that thought at last has ended, because the attempt to think has been shown entirely vain; the latter holds that its task is finished, because, in all essential principles, if not in complete detail, the system which he advocates is fixed and final truth. The one, as the other, is confident that his conclusions will stand the test of time — or, rather, he is sure that they need no further testing, hence that there will be none, and

that for the future the mind will be free to devote its powers to fields of inquiry in which real work remains to be accomplished.

I have said that between these two contrasted types of opinion there is but little difference. The remark should be amended by a recognition of the fact that in the matter of consistency the dogmatist enjoys a decided advantage. Thinkers who come forward to commend their theories of the world and life do it with a better grace when the views which they have to offer include a considerable number of affirmative conclusions. This is especially true of the negative and positive forms of speculation which mark the present age, for the doctrine of agnostic absolutism as now accepted differs widely from the despair of knowledge which has been shown to be a normal characteristic of eras of thought transition.[1] The logical corollary of agnostic reasoning would appear to be a Pyrrhonian distrust of its own results as well as doubt or denial with reference to the principles which are advocated by the representatives of other schools of thought. But this is a position which is seldom reached by the negative thinkers of the present day. In the case of the great majority their atti-

[1] Cf. chap. I., pp. 1–6, 7 ff.; chap. II., pp. 74–80; chap. III., pp. 120–122.

tude is just the opposite. So certain are they of the exclusive validity of the type of thinking which to them seems true, that they are often led to question even the sincerity of those who defend the credibility of constructive forms of reflection, not to say the positive outcome of constructive thought.[1] Thus certitude and professed ignorance jostle each other in the same argument. In support of new theories for which a favorable reception is desired, the perplexities of an era of change from one stage of culture to another are heralded as the decisive outcome, destined to be permanent, of the entire course of human thinking.

Nevertheless, periods of hesitant or negative reflection do come to a close.[2] This is the witness of history in regard to the various eras of transition which have preceded the present age, and, quite apart from the indications already manifested of recovery from recent sceptical thinking, there is sufficient reason for believing that the time in which we live will follow the general law. "To-day's fear will assuredly pass away," [3] wrote James Martineau at a date when the beginnings of reaction which in later years have cheered the

[1] Cf., *e.g.*, chap. VI., pp. 263–265, and footnotes.

[2] Cf. chap. I, pp. 28–44.

[3] Letter to B. B. Wiley, *Atlantic Monthly*, vol. LXXXVI., p. 491.

hearts of constructive thinkers were not yet apparent; and such courageous prophecy was warranted by the nature of negative movements in general as well as by the writer's discriminating study of the forces at work in the production of the special crisis to which his words referred. For negation, much more continued dubiety, is an abnormal, not a healthy form of intellectual development. It is occasional, or it should be, and not permanent. It comes as a recoil from systems which have outlived their power, or amid the confusion attending new discoveries which cannot be accommodated under the traditional rubrics. It is an evidence of friction in the working of the mental machine, a symptom of disorder in the organism of the mind, which finds itself unable to accomplish its task, and so halts baffled, not knowing whether to give up its efforts or to gird itself for fresh endeavor. Therefore the application of the law of transition to the phases of its own development is grounded in the nature of the case; and the progress of our inquiry confirms the conclusion which was reached toward the close of the opening survey: The laws of growth and decay control the course of negative as well as of positive opinion. Eras of transition in thought must themselves pass away.[1]

[1] Chap. I., pp. 28–29.

Moreover, when transitional eras are about to end, characteristic phenomena appear which foretell their closing. The stage of confident reliance on destructive thinking gives way to dissatisfaction with negative principles as a basis either for theory or for life. The belief that no better answers are attainable to the fundamental questions than those which from time to time have been propounded by the master-thinkers occasions the attempts of the eclectic school to meet the need for convictions of some sort by means of a combination of principles selected from the various classical systems. Concern for the foundations of life and conduct mingles with despair of theoretical reflection, until appeal is taken from reason to faith. In a word, there is felt lack, followed by efforts to supply it, which still do not break the circle of doubt and hesitation by which the deeper thinking of the age has been long hemmed in.[1]

For however welcome these beginnings of a return to healthier modes of thought may be, and whatever elements of value they may contain, or even, as we have seen, factors of permanent significance, they are not of themselves sufficient to complete the work which is demanded of the mind. If the matter may so be phrased, they

[1] Chap. I., pp. 29 ff.

belong still in the era of confusion; and though one of them at least, the appeal to faith, lays stress on principles destined to enter into the construction of the new age, the impulse which is needed to carry thought across the dividing-line does not reside in them alone.[1]

The promise of this more effective influence is given in the renewal of efforts to think things through to the end. Often these begin in a tentative and halting fashion: as attempts to show that the theories which have wrought havoc with traditional beliefs are not so destructive of accepted views as it has been supposed; as claims that later discoveries include fresh evidence in support of accepted principles, fit at least in part to replace the arguments which have been broken down. Or, on the other hand, they may take the form of brilliant generalizations which force the old and new into premature association. But the important matter is not their imperfection, but the fact that they begin at all. For their appearance shows that the minds of individuals and the spirit of the age are again addressing themselves to their proper task. It proves that courage has been found once more to face the inevitable problems. Above all, the endeavor to compass the overthrow of nega-

[1] Cf. chap. VI., in particular its closing discussions.

tive movements by means of reasoned thinking implies a recognition, even though at first it be a dim one, of the fundamental truth, that without the work of thought itself it is impossible to adjust the conflict between the systems of the past and the knowledge of the later time.

Premising, therefore, the necessity for intellectual synthesis in the transition from an age of negation to an era of positive opinion, it becomes important to note that there are several ways in which the process of reconstruction may be essayed. On the threshold of the inquiry a view presents itself which reduces to a minimum the amount of new truth to be appropriated, on the ground that the most needed thing of all is a return to the doctrines which were held in honor before the period of doubt began. This form of opinion is a familiar phenomenon in the history of culture. Nowadays it is common to believe that it is confined to the defenders of reaction in theology. But a little deeper study will show that it is characteristic of the representatives of various types of thought — favored by the conservative in philosophy as well as by the theological reactionary; shared in the field of politics by the admirers of the old régime and by those who would limit progress by strict adherence to the established principles of statecraft

rather than loyally develop them to meet the conditions of a later age; in science even, as we are told by the scientists themselves, appearing ever and anon to delay the acceptance of new discoveries, although it might have been antecedently supposed that scientific thinkers would prove peculiarly unresponsive to obscurantist impulses.

The value of the conservative spirit it is more difficult to estimate. Time was when it gained the plaudits of the world, enjoyed so great a supremacy, in fact, that the innovator developed his theories at the risk of pains and penalties decreed by those in authority for the punishment of dissidents and sectaries. It was perilous to dig about the foundations of traditional religious institutions, not only in West Europe toward the close of the Papal domination, but even in ancient Athens, as Socrates found to his cost, not now to speak of the long roll of Christian martyrs whose blood was exacted by an expiring paganism as the price of their faith. It was not only science that, in the persons of its leaders, was forced in early modern times to choose between solemn recantation and a hideous death; but the chiefs of a defeated political party, instead of taking their comfortable seats on the front opposition bench, were liable to make holiday for the mob on their

way to execution. Of late, however, the principle of authority has come down in the world. In the great majority of instances, the attempt to secure a judicial process against a heretic defeats its own object, since at one and the same time it serves to make his heresy more widely known and to prepossess in its favor the minds of those who hold that error can be dispelled alone by the establishment of truth. Remnants of the older doctrine linger on, indeed, even in the most highly civilized communities. Our physicians are required (and for the most part rightly) to heal our bodies in accordance with the tenets of a regular or of some irregular school, although our clergy are generally permitted to point our souls toward heaven, and to lead them thitherward, each in his own particular way. But taking it by and large, the verdict of modern culture bears as decidedly against the principle of authority, especially against the coercive exercise of authoritative power, as the opinion of former ages tended to support them.

Nevertheless it may be queried — though the suggestion exposes the questioner to scorn — whether such conclusions are altogether just. Personally, at least, the conservative is likely to be endowed with a number of admirable qualities. He may be narrow, but if he really thinks at all he must have

courage, and courage lies at the foundation of character in the scholar as well as in the man of active life. He may stand against the world for good, or he may block the path of progress by his will; but provided only that he battles in the open, without recourse to the tricks of intellectual fence, you will find in him a sturdiness of disposition, a firmness of conviction, a readiness for sacrifice in behalf of a worthy cause, a resolute purpose to maintain the conflict though all around him fail, which, if these traits were but combined with the open mind and the forward glance, would make him a reformer rather than the opponent of change.

Conservatism has its uses also, and the conservative still a mission in the world. The case is often dismissed with the remark that at best he is no more than a brake on the machine, that he saves the position on occasion only because he holds back so hard that he prevents less cautious souls from rushing on disaster. It is forgotten, in the politeness of the jibe, that this description of the conservative's office assigns to him the honorable task of safeguarding things of fundamental worth until rasher minds return from their vagaries to more sober occupation with the questions of the ages. Is it small honor to be a defender of the

faith in times when denials of ethical and spiritual truth form the current coin of thought? Does he do little service for his nation who contends for the essential principles of moderate government when destruction walks abroad, and the mob is glorifying as reason's goddess a harlot dressed in liberty's garb? Owes the world no debt of gratitude to those temperate thinkers who, in the first flush of some great discovery, stand for a reasonable patience in the endeavor to estimate its bearings on the problems of thought and conduct? Conservatism is marred by faults, and they are grave ones; at least it should be granted the qualities to which it may rightfully lay claim.

The defence, however, avails conservatism little in relation to the question which here presses for an answer. The movement is no doubt of value in that it protects principles and institutions of permanent importance against the dangers which arise from sceptical attacks. By virtue of its concern for established truth, it may also bring into the focus of attention views which are fitted to become points of departure for reconstructive work. But in and of itself, it is powerless to solve the problems of the age, or even to point out the way by which the positive reflection of the future may achieve success. For the method of reaction is a

method of limitation and restriction, not of hopeful progress. Its advocates aim to restore the old things as they were, instead of seeking to add to the former possessions of the mind the gain of the new. Least of all will they advance with steadfast courage to adapt their thinking to the altered circumstances of the time. From the outset, therefore, their efforts are doomed to failure, since they mistake the real conditions of the problem. Assuming that the old conclusions represented ultimate truth, they hold the new doctrines of necessity erroneous in so far as they depart from the principles formerly in control of thought; and they argue, further, that the liberal movements in every case proceed from other causes, if not from other motives, than a reasonable interpretation of the facts involved. But the way to overcome negation is by the enlargement and development of opinion rather than by the attempt to restore things to their former state. As Zeller, the veteran historian of Greek philosophy, remarks in his discussion of the death of Socrates,[1] the good old times can never be brought back just as they were before. The endeavor exactly to reproduce them is only a misguided venture. The man, the institution, the

[1] *Outlines of Greek Philosophy* (Eng. trans.), § 34; *Socrates and the Socratic Schools* (Eng. trans.), pp. 213 ff.

people, the age, that centres all its hopes on efforts at their renewal incurs the heaviest penalty which is visited on intellectual fault. It refuses to welcome light, so it is self-condemned to error.

Illustrations of the burden under which reaction labors abound in the history of the world. Thus there was a time when the Papal church had the opportunity, keeping the Reformers within its pale, by a revision of doctrine and the purification of morals to retain its hold upon Western Europe and the lands beyond the seas. But it knew not the day of its visitation and persisted in its attempt to conserve its former ways. So Luther was judged an unfrocked priest; the Council of Trent refused to do away with errors of belief and gave false doctrine a new claim upon the faithful; the Catholic Reaction, further, in its front the Jesuit band, reasserted the pontifical authority, maintained the Inquisition, in short assured the continuance of mediæval forms of faith and practice certain more and more to alienate the sympathies of the modern mind.

To reject the method of reaction, however, does not imply that negative types of thought can accomplish the needed work. For if conservatism fails, except perchance in its endeavor to rescue principles which have shown themselves of

value in the past, but which have been brought into peril in the course of intellectual progress, denial finds its chief purpose in the destruction of systems which have definitely outlived their power. Once and again already reference has been made to the truth that mere negation, apart from the constructive tendencies with which it finds itself allied, is devoid of creative force.[1] And this defect, inhering as is manifest in its very nature, cleaves also to particular movements which are born of the spirit of unrest. Sterile in themselves, they limit, in so far as they gain acceptance, the minds in which they find a lodgment and the age which takes from them its intellectual tone. Paralyzing thought, they yield no help for action, and so in a double sense are unfitted to inspire men for "deeds of high emprise." In the crisis of transition from mediæval to modern culture, the Roman church, as has just been urged, proved itself incapable of providing spiritual guidance for the world of Western Europe. But the real leadership, it must be added, the impulse which effected the enfranchisement and the renewal of the European mind, came not from those in whom the religious instinct was dead or dormant. The cultured paganism of North Italy produced no watchword for the time,

[1] Cf. chap. III., pp. 104–105.

sent forth no great leader, although it stood for intellectual liberty and anticipated principles which have played a foremost part in later thinking. Among the humanists of Germany there were grave defections from their alliance with the movement of reform, when they realized the quality of the reforming spirit and the scope of its implications. It was reserved for a Saxon professor-priest, in whose soul, alike robust and sensitive, faith still throve rather than still lingered, to lay the foundations of the new spiritual life. And history shows the facts the same in other fields as well. So, for instance, if the vicissitudes through which France was called to pass in the first half of the last century proved the old monarchy a failure after the Revolution, as it had been before the great upheaval first drove its representatives from the throne, at least the Bourbon rule was a hopeful form of government compared with the disorders which had followed the application of the principles inculcated by Voltaire, the Encyclopædists, or Rousseau.

Neither conservative reaction, therefore, nor the method of doubt or denial is fitted to lead thought on to a new constructive age. Nor is it possible to bring about the desired result by means of a simple combination of opposing principles, lopping off

here and adding or joining there, until an equation is reached which includes the new truth with the old and so cannot be called in question by any of the contending parties. For the nature of intelligence, and the character of its product, are other than the analogy implies. In so far as it has a content, thought is never of the purely mathematical type, and cannot be until the world shall have been investigated to its remotest bounds. Meanwhile, the simple rearrangements and equations of the mediators remain only less hopeless than the chop-logic of the dogmaticians, whose vision ends with the limits of their own systems. Nor will the employment of a different figure help out the argument. The old intellectual edifice, it is often said, stands in need of restoration; the evident way to effect the needed changes will be to introduce new materials, or in the extreme case to base it on new foundations recognized by all as sound. But the constructions of the mind are not mere products of mechanical craftsmanship. Therefore you cannot here cut out a weakened board and there replace a foundation stone, as it is possible to make over a dwelling or a church. There is rather a large element of truth in the conclusion, favored in recent times by the adherents of many different schools, which holds that thought is an organic

growth. It matures slowly and in quiet. It cannot be forced, neither can its development be thwarted. As one of the most eminent of church historians in America[1] once remarked concerning civilization at large, it undergoes no revolutions for which the way has not been first prepared. So, also, it is impossible to restore it by patchwork or any kind of artificial repairs.

Thus there remains but one way in which eras of transition in thinking can be brought to a close and eras of new constructive activity begun. In general, the process may be described as a process of synthetic development, in which description both of the terms employed have an emphatic significance. In the first place, the movement of thought from hesitant negation to active construction involves synthesis in the sense of correlation rather than of local combination. It does not denote a mere juxtaposition of elements or their mechanical union, which in application to the matter in hand would amount to little more than the method of mathematical rearrangement that has just been shown fallacious, but that living articulation of part with part, — here the principles of the older thinking which merit preservation and the results of the younger inquiry which are grounded in fact and

[1] The late Professor Philip Schaff.

reason, — that establishment of relations which was undertaken by antiquity, for the most part, as the great thinkers mused on the beauty of the world or the nature of intelligence, but which the later modern mind has more often approached along the line of its biological and sociological investigations. Such synthetic correlation is the distinctive characteristic of all thinking in its higher reaches. But never is it more necessary than in the transition from doubt to positive reconstruction. The problem then is the most serious which can confront the mind. Face to face with a mass of elements, more or less discordant, which must be fused into a working-theory capable of supporting, at the same time that it inspires, the culture of a new age, thought is put to the test of proving its own value by its success in accomplishing the crucial task. Anything less than the exercise of all its powers will lead it to defeat. Nothing can take the place of thoroughgoing reflection, of that thinking things through to the end which has above been noted as containing in itself the promise of intellectual recovery;[1] and this means the rational organic correlation, following on analysis of the given data, in which essentially the synthetic process consists.

[1] Cf. above, pp. 295–296.

In the nature of the case, synthesis of this kind implies development. The rational combination of principles by means of correlating thought based upon a thorough discussion of all the elements of the problem — how can such a procedure fail to draw out the inner meaning of the ideas and principles involved, and to build them up into higher unities? The same conclusion follows from a consideration of the conditions under which the work goes on. The change from doubt to renewed confidence in the powers of the mind toward the close of a transitional age is in no respect a more complete break with the past than the change from confidence to doubt by which the age was ushered in.[1] Still less than this does it imply an entire abandonment of the earlier culture. The one phase of thought takes its origin in opposition to negation, as the other in revolt against affirmative dogma. But neither is free from the influence of that which has gone before; while those thinkers, in particular, who first essay the work of reconstruction tend, often without conscious purpose, to adopt a mediating attitude, joining in one and the same system survivals of traditional views, constructive applications of the principles by which the older doctrines have been challenged, and anticipations of the fully developed

[1] Cf. chap. II., pp. 56–59.

positions of the age about to come.[1] As in the evolution of organic beings, so also in the development of thought: nowhere is entire discontinuity the rule. The world-old questions press for answers so soon as the intellect resumes its wonted activity. The forms in which they have been of old propounded and the ways in which attempt has been made to frame replies, these, outliving the stress of doubt and negative reflection, become parts of the mental heritage which is to be united with the discoveries of the later time. The utilization of the possessions of the mind — handed down or just acquired — will be perfect in the measure that their abiding significance is educed, that principles precisely ascertained are brought into rational correlation, that the body of resultant truth is organically connected with human knowledge as previously constituted — in a word, in so far as development in the intellectual sense is successfully carried out.

In consequence of this developmental synthesis, the new age by degrees arrives at a solution of the difficulties which have beset the spirit of the time. The new system of thought, however, is never final, since no one era, like no single individual, is ever in a position to give a completed answer

[1] Socrates was one of the great classical examples of this tendency.

to all the questions of the world and life. It is not even true that the positive results of the newer thinking amount in every case to an intellectual advance. The identity of development and progress is a favorite assumption, but one which is as little justified in the mental as it is in the physical world. Fortunately, the several eras of transition hitherto have for the most part been marked by thought changes which have also been additions to the resources of the mind. But this has not been the uniform result, nor can the happy outcome be expected to repeat itself in future crises under a universal law. For the developmental process includes the moment of dissolution as well as the evolutionary phase to which the attention of the majority of thinkers is commonly directed; and growth itself may be beneficent or evil, when it is tested by criteria of worth rather than by the standards of mere mechanical accretion. Because, moreover, of the gravity and the complexity of the fundamental problems, thought is never finished, even when it has benefited by development bringing positive gain. Hence the process of recovery from the effects of doubt gives rise to various partial phenomena, which suggest conclusions bearing on the general nature of the movement by which the age of doubt itself is brought to a term.

One typical form of the constructive movement may be described as an extension of formulas, more technically as an expansion of principles, or more abstractly still as an enlargement of the categories or fundamental conceptions under the guidance of which thought has formerly proceeded. The results of this phase of positive thinking consist in adjustments of opinion in virtue of which the meaning of a fact or principle is preserved, although the literal reality of the fact or the literal truth of the doctrine is abandoned in obedience to imperative proof. A classical example here, the effect of the substitution of the Copernican for the Ptolemaic astronomy, may be cited by way of illustration, provided it be remembered from the start that the questions which were raised by the changes in astronomical theory related not to theology alone, as it is sometimes supposed, but to the entire framework of ancient and mediæval doctrine in regard to the order of the world. For not only the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, but ancient philosophy and science as well, sanctioned the popular belief that the earth is the centre of the universe, and that the heavenly bodies have been made for man's convenience, even as they move around his earthly habitation in their encircling spheres. It was just this general acceptance of the geocentric

system, in fact, which gave the new heliocentric theory its revolutionary force. The conclusions of the latter fatally cut into the views which had hitherto prevailed concerning the nature and the arrangement of the material world. Therefore there was reason for serious anxiety over the question whether the system of spiritual truth which had postulated the traditional physical theory, and had been built upon it, would not also vanish, if this should prove untenable.

"For its unsettling effects upon time-honored beliefs and mental habits the Darwinian theory is no more to be compared to the Copernican than the invention of the steamboat to the voyages of Columbus," [1] so Mr. Fiske estimated the case in his Ingersoll Lecture at Harvard University a few months before his death. And yet how nearly the echoes of the controversy have died out of later thought. Sometimes still we study the movement with a languid historical interest, or we half condemn, half marvel at the persecution of Galileo and other martyrs of science for their opinions; but how few thinkers of the present time realize what a tremendous intellectual and spiritual crisis was forced upon the modern mind by the first announcement of discoveries which have now become

[1] *Life Everlasting*, p. 44; cf. *The Destiny of Man*, pp. 14–17.

part of the common stock of knowledge. In particular, the bearing of the new astronomy on questions of religious faith has been so far discounted by the thought of later times that most of our contemporaries overlook the problems which arise from the fact of the earth's littleness and man's insignificance amid the vastness of the universe, until some critic or apologist points out anew the discrepancies between the literal and the figurative interpretation of principles which continue to enjoy a wide-spread acceptance.[1]

In part, the change has been brought about by rejecting the scientific errors of the older view of the world, while at the same time the spiritual significance of the ancient theory has been retained, sometimes even, in altered forms, the ideas for which this formed the basis. No civilized moderns, except perchance a few absurd reactionaries, now refuse to accept the established principles of astronomical science, or with the late Brother Jasper, in defiance alike of grammar and of reason, argue that "the sun do move"; but still men speak of its setting and its rising, as still with the other celestial lights it appears to traverse the expanse

[1] *E.g.*, Alfred Russel Wallace, "Man's Place in the Universe," *Fortnightly Review*, March and September, 1903, and the discussion which Wallace's papers have called forth. Cf. also, A. Sabatier, *Esquisse d'une Philosophie de la Religion* (7th ed., 1903), pp. 318–321.

above. Purists may object to church steeples pointing upward, to our speech of heaven, to teaching children of the world beyond the skies; yet, despite whatever modicum of force these objections may contain, deduction being made moreover for the touch of pedantry which here and there mars the thinking of the time, how far we are removed from the anxious questionings of other ages which these criticisms recall to mind. With Job, with Psalmist, or with Prophet, we meditate of "Him who stretcheth out the heavens like a curtain" and appoints to men their lot, deriving from the thought of his majesty and his providence the spiritual lessons which are needed for our lives, and not perplexed, as were our forefathers a few conturies ago, because the seer's vision of the celestial confines, like the crystalline spheres of the older speculative science, has been proved discordant with astronomical fact. Or we may share in the still more splendid conceptions of the New Testament writers, and realize that our citizenship is from above, in the heavenly Jerusalem, which is the mother of us all, where Christ dwells on the throne of his glory, and whose builder and maker is God — the while acknowledging without shipwreck to our faith the undeniable elements of imagery which these thoughts contain, confident

that we are subjects of the celestial king, since we have been granted the right to call ourselves the sons of God.

The reasonableness of this method is grounded, as will be seen below, in the nature of the mental processes involved in the development of opinion, and in the process of development itself. If it were first and last a phenomenon of linguistic interpretation alone, its legitimacy would be more than doubtful; its validity depends on its basis in the evolution of thought. At best, however, it is a serious question to what extent it may be legitimately employed in the solution of critical problems and within what limits its application must be confined. The doubt presses most sharply in relation to the articles of religious faith, although here, as elsewhere, the interests of other types of thought are also at stake. Absolute monarchy in England has been replaced by the constitutional form; but the sovereign still uses the language of personal rule, although his ministers — themselves responsible to the representative assembly, and ultimately to the nation at large — exercise most of the functions of government. In the United States free trade is out of court for the adherents of the dominant political faith — but "reciprocity" will save at once

the trade of the country and the orthodox party creed; just as "a tariff for revenue only" may be stretched to protect a number of industries whose infancy prolongs itself beyond all human calculation. Without attempting to decide in any particular case the value of the development which has taken place, it is easy to see that adjustment through the enlargement of symbols may degenerate into artificial verbal evasion.

The difficulty becomes most acute, however, when the problem under consideration is one which concerns spiritual principles. The interpretation of Scripture, the acceptance of established creeds, the performance of religious obligations and official duties, "the reconciliation of religion and science," the defence of religious or ethical principles — all these have been colored in eras of transition by the method of expansive adjustment or attempted by its aid. Rarely in any period has this procedure been more favored than in the present. Nevertheless, in the course of each special movement as in the history of each age, a point is finally reached at which it must be asked, Has, or has not, the limit of legitimate interpretative development been overstepped? For, when this is passed, the method in essence becomes quite other than that which

has been described, although on the surface the earlier and the later phases may appear the same. In the former, it was in fact development by interpretation; but there is constant danger in times of doubt that this will pass over into evisceration by interpretation, if the phrase may be allowed, with an attendant rejection of the principles which are believed to be preserved. In the one case there is a broadening of formulas and symbols for the same essential truth; in the other, the truth represented is in effect made void, though its outward setting is retained.

The exact determination of the point of danger is not an easy task.[1] In many instances, there is reason to fear, precise determination is excluded by the nature of the case. Between the demands of punctilious literalism, on the one hand, and the temptations to allegorizing license, on the other, there lies a wide range of problems the decision of which must be left to conscientious tact. That is to say, they are matters of opinion. Alike as they force themselves upon the individual mind, or, claiming the collective labor of many minds at once, make their appeal to the spirit of the age, their solution will depend on that nice blend-

[1] Cf. chap. VI., pp. 272–276, for a discussion of an analogous problem.

ing of intellectual insight and wisely considered experience and delicate moral appreciation which constitutes the only safe resource when a fully reasoned judgment is impossible. The complete and final adjustment will come only in the course of intellectual evolution. Only when the answers to the questions raised shall have been worked out by the activity of thought at large, when this proffered theory and that shall have been tested as well by application to the needs of life as by the criteria of critical analysis, when there shall have resulted that balance of opinion which issues from the silent progress of thought in its organic entirety — only then will it be possible to say with certainty what the final judgment is to be. Meanwhile there is need for candor and discernment, for the freedom of the open mind, for charitable judgments of fellow-men. There will be occasion for courage and patience, also, and a nice sense of intellectual honor — not now to dwell on that simple honesty which, imperative as it is in the affairs of everyday life, is still more painfully missed when it is absent from thought concerning fundamental problems. For to yield this sensitiveness of mental habit means to give up the choicest of the intellectual virtues. Better, far better, to grope in mental darkness,

better to abandon any cherished conviction, no matter how bereft its loss may leave the soul, than to depart from this central principle of intellectual integrity, which is at the same time the condition of intellectual power.

The limitation of the method, like the explanation of it, is fitted to throw light on its nature and its value. These depend, in the first place, on the abstract and complicated nature of thought in the special sense of correlating consciousness.[1] Because of these characteristics, the work of intelligence is possible only as the understanding makes use of representative symbols, which serve as the vehicles or carriers of the thought-activity. In the case of civilized man these symbolic expressions are for the most part words or other linguistic forms, although symbols of other kinds may also be used for the purpose, and in fact are often so employed. The more complex and the more abstract the subjects which the mind takes into consideration, the more intricate the connection becomes between these signs and the thought-processes which they mediate, and the larger the room which is left for variation in

[1] Cf. J. Sully, *The Human Mind*, vol. I., pp. 388 ff.; also, chap. III., pp. 107–110, above, and almost any of the numerous discussions of the topic in psychological and philosophical literature.

the representative expression of one and the same underlying idea or principle. If, finally, the matters considered not only involve the work of the theoretical intellect, but engage the interest of the emotional and volitional nature as well, the complexity of the symbolic element attains its maximum development. Such evidently is the case before us. Forms of political organization, party principles, above all, philosophical conclusions or theological doctrines, cannot even be discussed without the use of representative expressions which are symbols many times removed from the concrete actualities of everyday life and popular speech. Absolute monarchy, protection and free trade, the existence of a God, immortality, the inspiration of the Scriptures — merely to pronounce the words evinces their highly abstract character, at the same time that it recalls the echoes of profound emotional experience, when it does not produce it anew, and revives the influence of the long course of political or spiritual history which has given them power over the mind.

Ideas and principles of this kind cannot be reduced to formulas either complete or mathematically precise. Their symbolic statements, therefore, possess a certain flexibility which makes it possible

at times to adjust them in accordance with the development of the doctrines for which they stand without making a violent break with the past. Or rather, the adaptation may be tacit, involving no outward change at all. Thought progresses and gives to time-honored views a new setting, in part it may even be a new content, although their essential meaning remains the same. Concrete expressions, fully adequate and accurate, could not reflect the movement without radical alteration. Abstract representations, on the contrary, just because of their symbolic character, include a margin of variability within which adaptation without external modification may safely go on.

Again — and this completes its groundwork in reason — the enlargement of formulas is a function of thought in its over-individual manifestations. Even in the individual thinker the process of adjustment is often unaccompanied by reflective purpose. Much more are the influence of mind on mind, and the collective movement of many minds tending toward the common goal, likely to be independent of a clear realization of the work which is in process of accomplishment. One question or another presses for an answer. The perplexity of the time must be lightened, now here, now

there, unless a total defeat of thought is to be accepted. For this difficulty or that resulting from the progress of inquiry a solution is believed to have been found, or at least a means of partial relief discovered. Often there is little realization of the broader issues, let alone a thorough comprehension of the task which must be surmounted before the age will be in a position to risk the entire cessation of its anxious questioning. Thus there is given no opportunity for unworthy compromises, no chance to twist symbolic principles into agreement with conclusions which void them of all force. Thought is moving, but it has not become aware of the nature of its own progress or the end toward which its movement tends. Sooner or later a time will come when the results of its activity will emerge in conscious self-knowledge of the course it has been pursuing, but then, at least in substance, the process of readjustment will be finished. At this stage the general outcome of the process will reveal the limitations, already described, of individual opinion. But it will also bring to light the deeper justification of the individual's thinking which is supplied by its congruence with the tendencies of thought at large, these in turn being proved defensible by the fact that they amount to a rational, and not a merely verbal change.

A second mode of transition from negative to positive thinking depends still more clearly than the first upon reasoned synthesis, and escapes the moral peril to which the first is exposed, although it also yields no complete solution for the problems which confront the spirit of the age. This second transitional process is that of central adjustment. In a given thought-crisis, after the issues most provocative of confusion have been met to some sensible degree, the outline of the new doctrine is accepted and men turn their attention to more urgent tasks, leaving the further questions involved to be worked out by scholars or the general progress of opinion. The later stages of this form of the synthetic process are often of a quiet kind. The clamor of the earlier controversy was a symptom of the agitation caused by the difficulties of the time. The solution of the central problem, or even the belief that in essence it is soluble, goes far to restore the mental equipoise: the advocates of progress, now that their main contention has been admitted, cease to feel impelled to militant activity in its enforcement; the friends of menaced intellectual and spiritual interests, relieved from their anxiety, are no longer tempted to break out in heated attacks on their opponents or to defend the truth by arguments of

doubtful cogency. At this period the danger of error rather lies in a different direction, in the tendency to rebound from doubt and controversy toward affirmative conclusions prematurely drawn. The central principle being accepted which not long ago was in dispute, its defenders are prone to believe in its universal applicability and explanatory force, its whilom adversaries to assume that there is no further need for concern about its bearings on other phases of thought.

This type of synthetic development is more important than the first, which has been considered in detail. The grounds of its superior significance are to be found in the directness of the attack which it makes on the crucial questions of the age. It is not so much a rearrangement of conceptions and formulas, which in part consists in thought-activity, in part follows on this, as an immediate grapple with the perplexities by which men's minds have been distracted. If successful, it makes a real contribution to the solution of the problems of the time. Dealing immediately with thought-issues, it suggests, in so far as it at all makes headway with its task, a reasonable means of escape from the difficulties under the burden of which thought has been laboring. As its results secure acceptance, it leads men to believe that the

dilemma of opposing theories is not so exclusive as was at first supposed, that views which then appeared entirely subversive of accepted statements of truth may be brought into agreement, or at least into partial harmony, with principles which they hold most dear. In short, a few central positions having been successfully determined, or the conviction being gained that the burning questions are susceptible of answers not in conflict with the necessary postulates of intellectual and spiritual life, the way lies open for the advance from dismay and controversy to an era of more stable thinking.

Although it possesses so great significance, the mode of transition by central adjustment may here be passed without extended consideration, since a conspicuous example of its working has so impressed itself upon the thought of recent times that it has more than once claimed attention in this essay. The modern doctrine of evolution,[1] especially in its biological form, and the course of opinion in regard to it, have illustrated this second form of the transitional process from the beginning to the end. The early stages of the conflict in England, when Mr. Huxley in particular by his brilliant dialectic, and not without a certain

[1] Cf. chap. III., pp. 118–119, 126 ff.; chap. IV., pp. 157 ff.

joy in combat, pressed hard upon the supporters of conservative views; the echoes of the controversy in other English-speaking countries, especially the unhappy debate in the United States, with further misunderstanding on both sides of the logic of the argument as well as of the bearings of the doctrine upon ethical and religious principles; the spread of the discussion and the confusion to Continental thought; the beginnings of mediation; the hasty and premature employment of evolutionary principles in explanation of all kinds of questions; and yet, despite unnecessary quarrels and misguided ventures, a settlement of the issue which to a degree releases the mind of the time for needed reflection on other problems — the successive phases of the movement have closely paralleled the line of development which *a priori* was to have been expected.

In still another respect the history of the modern theory of evolution exemplifies the method of progress by central adjustment: the direction of thought concerning the questions of the time is toward the future rather than the past; hence it gives promise for the constructive activity of the new age. This advantage, also, follows from the essential nature of the process as reflection upon fundamental problems. For it is not to be for-

gotten that the developmental synthesis in which the progress from negative to positive thinking has been found to consist requires as its central and indispensable factor productive, if it should not rather be termed creative, intellectual work. However important conciliation may be when principles of tried value and discoveries of scope and influence are to be wrought into a consistent whole, conciliation alone cannot be relied upon as adequate to the task in hand. It assists the spirit of the age to transcend the problems which have been thwarting its endeavors to advance, but it is incapable of inspiring progress when the crisis of transition has been passed. Here once more the analogy of mental and physical life throws light upon the matter: convalescence may be secured by the use of remedies, but health comes only with the reëstablishment of normal function and the renewal of vigor which thence proceeds. So is it also with the illnesses of thought. The first steps back toward health necessarily include movements of a halting and tentative kind. But let no one think that continued groping is the way in which intellectual robustness is to be regained. In order to this there is need for a restoration of activity, for the forthputting of intellectual power, for the employment of recovered

strength in the construction of thought-principles fitted to be the vehicles of the life and culture of a believing age.

In a third form of the transitional process, transition by displacement or substitution, the constructive and the negative spirit together culminate, as one view of the world and life dislodges a second to establish itself in the other's room. So Christianity, at the close of its long battle with heathenism, overcame the pagan faiths, and even served as a centre about which the forces of civilization might gather in the struggle to erect a new culture from the ruins left standing by the barbarian destroyers. So in Teutonic Europe Protestantism supplanted Catholicism in the Reforming age. So liberal views of government have driven out tyranny, or are still engaged in carrying out the substitution of free political institutions for the older, less liberal forms. Here, again, it is important to note that the process of transition, in this case a process of expulsion and replacement, never reaches a final, or even a complete result. Approximations to a full and definite exchange of one form of positive culture for another no doubt occur, the phenomena becoming more frequent as we ascend the stream of civilization toward its source. But if the process

be literally construed, it may well be doubted whether its apparent reality is not due to an illusion of distance, later thinkers being led to underestimate the complexity and the gradualness of the transitional change at the same time that they exaggerate the element of completeness in the supersession of the ancient by the new régime.

Of the three types of transition under consideration, the third stands nearest to the culture of the later age. In its negative aspect, as a phase of conflict, it may make its appearance early in the contest against the older civilization; but its positive results cannot be realized until the struggle has been brought, nearly or entirely, to a victorious close, so that the new system of thought and life is about to establish its supremacy. And as this positive outcome is the salient because the most significant factor in the process, transition by substitution may be considered as one of the latest in time of all the phenomena which mark the development of a transitional age.

These characteristics present no obstacles, however, to the organic connection of some or all of the several tendencies in the same transitional movement. Although separately described, they do not necessarily occur in isolation; the normal case is rather one of connection and coöperation,

just as the situation has been found to be in regard to the various negative movements by whose agency the era of transition was brought on. Expansion of formulas, therefore, central adjustment, displacement and substitution, do not denote separate and independent forms of change, but tendencies of thought and life which differ from one another enough to be considered in themselves distinct, and yet act and react, affect, support, or reinforce the one the other, as essential factors in the total movement of the times.

Perhaps the largest common element is shared by the method of adjustment and the method of substitution, knowledge and emotion mingling here under the influence of the constructive advance. For, with the renewal of positive thinking, hope also is reborn, since hopefulness is the reflex effect in consciousness of the promise of recovery. Minds of the "liberal" or "progressive" order, in particular the leaders of the newer movements, often go still further, transforming hope into sanguine anticipation of the speedy solution of all the problems of thought through the magic of the principles for which they stand. In the event, these unreasonable manifestations of confidence will be found to require limitation, as they also deserve the criticisms which in the interest of sound thinking

have been passed upon them at earlier stages of the present inquiry.[1] Even such optimistic exaggerations, however, have a part to play in promoting intellectual progress. In this respect they may be compared to voyages of discovery destined never to reach their goal, which nevertheless reward the traveller, and through him the world, with valuable knowledge gathered on the way. The pole is not yet gained, although many brave explorers have turned their faces thitherward, but science has richly profited by their labors and their sufferings in arctic lands. And if impossibility be substituted for the extreme difficulty of the quest, the analogy will hold good of thought-voyages as well. Is the intellectual millennium ever to arrive? Or is the notion of a completed theory of the universe always to remain an ideal conception fitted to lead men farther, and ever farther, along the road to truth, but a chimera merely so soon as it is transformed from a guidant idea into an idea with content?[2]

Until the millennium of thought shall arrive, the case is evident. Many lines of thought converge to the one conclusion, that a completed solution of the universe is under the actual conditions of

[1] Cf. especially, chap. IV., pp. 171 ff.

[2] Cf. the Kantian distinction between "regulative" and "constitutive" ideas or principles in relation to the knowledge of the transcendent world.

human thinking beyond the bounds of possibility. Much less is it given to any one age or system to finish the reflective work which is laid upon different minds and eras as a task common to them all. In order, nevertheless, that the fruits of knowledge may be fully reaped, and, more pertinently to the present theme, in order that the process of transition may be carried through to its constructive stage, it is necessary that a comprehensive attack be made upon the whole round of ultimate problems, starting from the point of vantage gained through the labors of the latest years. Courage and confidence for the enterprise may be in part supplied by expectations of complete success which never can be fulfilled. Hopes which are better founded, because they are more guarded and more exactly conformed to the demands which may reasonably be made upon a given principle or system, are more favorable still to intellectual reconstruction. They foster positive reflection on the questions at stake without suggesting delusive estimates of the results likely to be attained. Whatever of loss they occasion, therefore, by their failure to encourage audacious intellectual enterprises, they make good by their tendency to safeguard the mind against wanderings which lead nowhither, except to disappointment and renewed despair. Bravery

is indispensable in mental and physical undertakings both, but an excess of boldness is the sure precursor of disaster.[1] And disaster, when recovery is making from the disturbed conditions of a transitional age, means the resurgence of doubt, a swift return to confusion and unbelief, the reaction being proportional to the false anticipations by which thought has been led on.

If it were necessary to choose, however, between the constructive thought which risks the dangers of over-confidence and the timid thinking which hesitates to put its strength to the test by facing serious issues, the decision need not be long postponed. Active courage is especially commended by the fact that the transition from doubt to belief — and belief, it must be repeated, in this connection denotes any form of positive or constructive as opposed to negative conviction — cannot be effected by the aid of theoretical intelligence alone, but by reason working in unison with the practical faculties of mind. Emotion and will are active in the first attempts at recovery, when the negative movement begins to feel the slackening which follows the culmination of its power. They

[1] A classical example is the decline of Hegel's influence shortly after his death in 1831, and the flood of negative and materialistic views which rushed over Germany in the middle period of the nineteenth century.

exert a potent influence also, when, with the ebbing tide, the thoughts of men are borne no longer toward the breakers, but outward on a new and hopeful voyage. The historical development, moreover, is the consequence of deep-lying causes. It is the whole man that thinks and decides and accepts and believes, not any single side or phase of mind or any group of faculties acting in isolation from the rest. And as in the case of individuals, so with the mind of the time. This, too, especially when questions of practical moment are at stake, or principles which condition the progress of culture and civilization at large as well as the progress of abstract thinking, functions through the co-working of all its several powers. Above,[1] thought so considered has been described as an organic process rather than as one which is merely logical or ratiocinative; it might be called vital as well, were it not for the misleading associations which often cluster about the term.

In order, therefore, to complete the advance from a negative to a positive age, developmental synthesis must conform to two different yet related standards: it must satisfy the demand for conclusions in accord with the results of advancing knowledge; it must meet the need for principles fitted to serve

[1] pp. 304–306.

as the foundation and the vehicles of a vigorous life. These constitute the criteria by which the value of constructive movements is to be tested. Views of the world and judgments of life deficient in the one respect or the other at best promote recoveries from doubt which are temporary only, or partial in their scope. Principles or systems, on the contrary, which combine truth and power, — Christianity at the downfall of the ancient world, the movements which carry Europe forward from mediævalism to modern times, even the political and intellectual tendencies of the age of revolution, — these, making epochs in history, produce also widespread and lasting effects. It is when the results of thought have entered into the blood, when the outcome of reflection has been transformed into habit or instinct, that intelligence plays its full part in the world. Ideas are forces, nay, in the last analysis there are no forces comparable with ideas, but they do not manifest their power while they remain confined within study walls or the possession of the mind on its theoretical side alone. Those conclusions of human thinking, — be they principles of science or literature, history or art, philosophy or theology or morals, — which are destined to guide intellectual and spiritual progress because they inspire it, must cease to form

the shades of abstract reflection, must become clothed upon with the flesh and blood of desire and interest and hope and fear and aspiration, must be tried amid the fret of life's struggle and life's griefs as well as transfigured in the radiance of life's joys, before they can fulfil their mission for the race. And the need is doubly urgent when the minds of men are to be roused from doubting despair to the work of a new constructive age. Then, above all, thought must become conviction, reason find an ally in will, belief pass over into joyous faith, for so only can they accomplish their appointed work.

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I find "The Quest of Happiness" a very rich and beautiful work. It is eminently a book for the home. Wherever it is known it must make life sweeter and more wholesome. PHILIP S. MOXOM, *Pastor of South Congregational Church, Springfield, Mass.*

It is a book full of help and sympathy, marked by a wide acquaintance with literature and with life, and by a true insight into those conditions which make for the truest and best existence. S. P. CADMAN, *Pastor of Central Congregational Church, Brooklyn.*

It is a consummate statement of the highest conception of the nature of human life, and of the only methods by which its meaning and possibilities can be attained. Dr. Hillis is not only a great master of style, but a serene satisfaction with God's method of moral government breathes from every page and makes the teacher trustworthy. CHARLES FREDERIC GOSS.

"The Quest of Happiness" is Dr. Hillis's very best book. It is strong, vivid, clear, and has a certain indefinable human quality which will be sure to give it a large circulation and make it a source of great helpfulness. I especially enjoyed the "Forewords." They would make an attractive volume in themselves. AMORY H. BRADFORD, *Pastor of First Congregational Church, Montclair, N. J.*

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